MONDAY
April 14, 2025

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
22 Pages ₹ 6.00

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RNI No. KARENG/1970/49945

Vol. 56 • No. 88

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Tirupati » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

134th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Garlanding the Statue of

Architect of Indian Constitution, Great Humanitarian, Bharat Ratna

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR

April 14, 2025 Monday at 10.30 AM
East Gate of Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru

Programme

Time - 10.45 AM
Venue - Vidhana Soudha, Grand Steps, Bengaluru

Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare during review meeting of the department.

As is enshrined in our constitution, **"to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture"** - is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country.

Commissioner
Social Welfare Department

@SWDGok

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INQUIRY ORDERED

Eight killed in blast at firecracker unit in A.P.

SOUTH » PAGE 9

LOGGED IN

Kerala to be declared fully digital literate

SOUTH » PAGE 9

'DELIBERATE ATTACK'

Russia targeted Indian firm's warehouse: Kyiv

NEWS » PAGE 12

DATA POINT

Stagnant incomes, rising prices

City residents struggle to meet expenses

OPINION » PAGE 11

CONTRASTING WINS

MI pips DC in thriller, RCB eases past RR

SPORT » PAGE 17

Kerala seeks to have pending Bills deemed as passed

The State is set to contend in the top court that the action of former Governor on some Bills was 'erroneous in law'

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

Armed with the Supreme Court's landmark judgment on Bills kept pending by the Governors and the President, Kerala is set to contend in the top court that all the Bills pending with the President be deemed as passed.

The Supreme Court last week deemed Bills kept pending by Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi to have received assent. Kerala will approach the Supreme Court next month seeking similar relief.

The Supreme Court had ruled that the prolonged refusal of Mr. Ravi to give assent to the Bills was "illegal" and "erroneous in law".

Kerala had earlier approached the top court against similar acts of former Governor Arif Mohammad Khan. It had also moved the court against President Droupadi Murmu's act of withholding assent to a few Bills.

Kerala will contend that the Bills pending with Ms. Murmu, including those for which she had withheld assent, be deemed as passed since the very act of the Governor sitting on them and later referring them to the President was "erroneous in law". The State will also highlight the fact that the President had assigned no reasons for withholding consent for the Bills.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

CAPF deployed in Murshidabad; situation under control, says DGP

Congress calls for all-party meeting, BJP takes to the streets in Kolkata, Trinamool alleges spread of misinformation; over 150 arrested in connection with the violence; BJP MP urges Amit Shah to declare select districts a 'disturbed area'

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Seventeen companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) were deployed in Murshidabad district of West Bengal on Sunday following violent protests over the Waqf (Amendment) Act that claimed three lives on Saturday.

Over 150 people were arrested, and one person who sustained a bullet injury was admitted to a State-run health facility, the police said.

Director-General of Police, West Bengal, Rajeev Kumar held meetings with senior police officials in Murshidabad. He said the situation was "very much under control".

Ananda Roy, Superintendent of Police, Jangipur, appealed to people not to believe in rumours and approach the police in case they need any clarifications. The SP said 155 persons had been arrested so far in connection with the violence.

On alert: BSF personnel near the wreckage caused during the violence in Murshidabad on Sunday. ANI

A total of 23 high-ranking officers from the State police and other agencies have been deployed in the violence-affected district.

Karni Singh Shekhawat, Inspector-General of Police, Border Security Force, was among those present in the district. Nine companies of the BSF have been moved to the strife-torn areas.

Eighteen police personnel were injured in the violence.

Isha Khan Chowdhury, Congress MP for the Malda Dakshin constituency under which the violence-affected areas of Murshidabad district fall, said that he and Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury had called for an all-party meeting on the violence.

BJP protests

Almost the entire leadership of the State BJP unit took to the streets in Kolkata on Sunday in protest against the violence. BJP MP Jyotirmoy Singh Mahato wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah urging the Centre to declare select border districts of West Bengal "disturbed areas".

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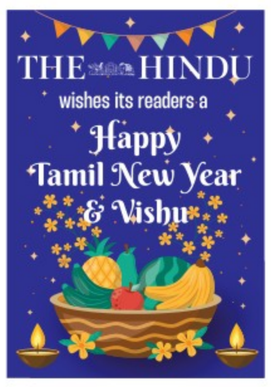
EDITORIAL » PAGE 10

NEARBY

751 accidents by minors in a year

BENGALURU
Karnataka has recorded 751 road accidents by individuals below the age of 18, between 2023 and 2024, making it the sixth-highest in India, said the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

» PAGE 3



EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGES 4 & 5

Baisakhi cheers

Buoyant hope: Devotees at the Golden Temple in Amritsar to mark the harvest festival Baisakhi on Sunday. Wheat is being harvested in Punjab and Haryana, and the output is expected to be higher than that in the past year in the two States. AFP (REPORT ON PAGE 14)

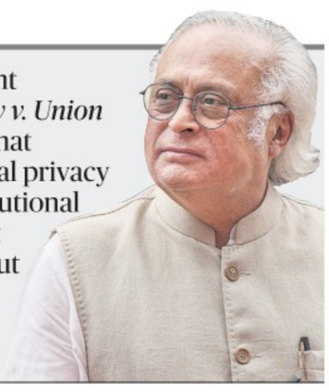
Pause, review, repeal amendment to RTI Act: Ramesh tells Vaishnaw

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In a letter to Union Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday, Congress Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh warned that the proposed amendment to the Right to Information Act, 2005, would have a "devastating" effect on the transparency law. He urged Mr. Vaishnaw to "pause, review, and repeal" the change.

The letter was in response to Mr. Vaishnaw's assurance in reply to an earlier letter by Mr. Ramesh, in which the Congress leader had expressed concern over Section 44 (3) of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, which places a blanket ban on sharing any "personal information" with RTI applicants.

> The judgment *(Puttaswamy v. Union of India)* reinforces that safeguarding personal privacy and promoting institutional transparency are not mutually exclusive but are jointly essential
>
> **JAIRAM RAMESH**
> Congress general secretary



Mr. Vaishnaw had responded to Mr. Ramesh, saying the amendment was aimed at preventing the "misuse" of the law, and the information that is specifically required to be disclosed (such as salaries of public officials) will remain accessible.

Four points

Making four points by way of a counter-response to the Minister, Mr. Ramesh said: "I would therefore strongly again urge you to pause, review, and repeal the amendment made to the RTI Act, 2005. As you would have seen, this issue has also exercised a broad spectrum of people from civil society, academics, and political parties."

Along with Mr. Ramesh, 130 Opposition MPs have signed another letter demanding a reversal of the amendment. The push-back has also come from digital advocacy groups as well as transparency groups – most prominently the National Campaign for People's Right to Information – which have been raising an alarm since 2023 about the amendment.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

Kerala temple opens sacred space to all sections

Previously restricted to specific communities, the inner quarter of the centuries-old Pilicode Rayaramangalam temple in Kasaragod district has been opened to all communities for the first time following a reformist campaign

The Hindu Bureau
KASARAGOD

In a landmark move, devotees from all communities entered the *nalambalam* – the sacred inner quarter – of the centuries-old Pilicode Rayaramangalam temple in Kasaragod district of Kerala for the first time, ending restrictions based on caste.

Previously restricted to specific communities, the sacred space in the temple managed by the Malabar Devaswom Board was opened to all communities following a campaign led by a reformist organisation.

Evolving norms: Devotees come out of the centuries-old Pilicode Rayaramangalam temple in Kasaragod. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Around 8 a.m. on Sunday, a day before the Vishu festival, a group of 16 devotees stepped into the inner quarter of the temple. Others who had gathered to witness the moment followed, marking a significant shift in the temple's practices.

K.V. Rajesh, a member of the group, said that only people from the Brahmin, Marar, and Warrier communities were allowed to enter the space earlier. Maniyani, Nair, Vaniya and a few other communities were allowed entry during the festival period.

He said the initiative spearheaded by the reformist body Pilicode *Ninav Purush Swayaamsahaya Sangham*, a men's self-help group, gained momentum with its resolution advocating for universal entry rights. This was followed by the formation of the *Janakiya Samithi*, a people's committee comprising socio-cultural and political organisations, which petitioned the *Tantri* (head priest), State Devaswom Minister V.N. Vasavan, and the temple administrative committee. While the *Tantri* had responded that worshippers could pray near the inner quarter without affecting rituals, access into it came after the festival ceremonies concluded, he added.

The *Janakiya Samithi* confirmed that the inner quarter will remain open to all devotees in the coming days, reinforcing that the change was not symbolic, but permanent.

Sunday's event is being hailed as a moral and cultural victory, a sign that age-old rituals must evolve with time to reflect equality and inclusion.

Police shoot dead man accused of killing five-year-old girl in Hubballi

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

The police shot dead a man accused of killing a five-year-old girl in Hubballi on Sunday. Sources said that the officers shot the accused in the leg but he died later.

A team of city police traced the accused and tried to catch him. But he was shot when he tried to escape. He bled to death later, the police said.

Earlier, the Police Commissioner formed five teams to investigate the murder of the five-year-old girl in Hubballi on Sunday.

Investigators found the body in a toilet in a house in one of the areas in the city. It was shifted to the Karnataka Medical College and Research Centre Hospital.

The girl's parents told the police that an unidentified person abducted the girl and killed her. The girl was probably taken away when the mother was working as a domestic help at a house.

Police Commissioner N. Shashikumar told reporters that the girl belonged to a family of workers from one of the districts in Kalyana Karnataka region.

To a query, he said that officers are submitting an inquest requisition to the doctors, to find out the cause of death and to see if there was an attempt to rape.

Meanwhile, a few neighbours of the family staged a protest in front of a local police station. They said that a worker from Bihar raped and killed the girl. They sought death penalty for the accused.

Some of them also demanded that the accused be handed over to them. Others demanded that migrant workers be thrown out of the twin cities as they are found to be "committing serious crimes like rape and dacoity".

The Police Commissioner said that the demand for throwing out migrant workers is unfair. He said that it has not yet been ascertained if the accused is a migrant worker or not.

A complaint is being filed.

Sai Sudharsan — the perfect sync between consistency and authority

The Tamil Nadu southpaw has been churning out a truckload of runs, pleasing on the eye and of great impact in a line-up of explosive stroke-makers; even had he not joined the race for the Orange Cap, he'd still firmly be on course for an international comeback

SANDEEP SAXENA

R. Kaushik

It might still be early days, but this edition of the Indian Premier League is already fast becoming the Season of the 20-something left-handers.

Ahead of double-header Sunday (April 13), a 29-year-old from Trinidad & Tobago (Nicholas Pooran) helmed the run-making charts while a 20-year-old from Khost in Afghanistan (Noor Ahmad) wore the Purple Cap. Two of the three hundreds of Season 18 have come from the scything willows of 24-year-olds (Priyansh Arya and, famously on Saturday night, Abhishek Sharma), the third from a 26-year-old seasoned campaigner on the international comeback trail (Ishan Kishan). Left certainly has been overwhelmingly right.

Add to this flamboyant bunch - and make no mistake, this is a largely flamboyant bunch of batters to whom hitting sixes is second nature, complemented by a left-arm wrist-spinner who, even if he wanted to be, couldn't be anything but flamboyant - a quiet, understated rangy 23-year-old left-hander from Chennai who cries out for attention not with flashy earrings and outlandish gestures but with the simplicity of his strokeplay, at once effortless and breathtaking.

Answering to the name of B. Sai Sudharsan, the Gujarat Titans opener is engaged in a gripping battle with Pooran for the race to the Orange Cap. The symbol of supremacy when it comes to run-making in the IPL has changed hands more than once and is currently in the possession of the Caribbean charmer. But while the Orange Cap will be a welcome addition to his kitbag, Sudharsan's primary focus is not on the slice of individual glory. The larger cause, team success, resonates with him; he was part of the squad (but not the XI) that won its maiden final on debut in 2022, top-scored with 96 in the last-ball loss to Chennai Super Kings in the title clash 12 months later and has been one of their more consistent performers in the last four seasons. Now armed with a maturity that goes well beyond his biological age, it sets him up as potentially one for the future from a leadership perspective too.

Nip and tuck

Pooran and Sudharsan have been engaged in a fabulous battle of nip-and-tuck in the race for top run-making honours. The far more explosive Trinidadian leads the way with 349 runs from six innings at an average and a strike-rate superior to Sudharsan. Where the latter averages 54.83 and strikes at 151.61 per 100 runs scored (he has 329 runs, also from six innings), Pooran's corresponding numbers are 69.80 and 215.43 respectively. The older batter has smashed 31 sixes (just one fewer than Chennai Super Kings' entire team tally at the conclusion of their sixth game) to Sudharsan's 13 but then again, this isn't a battle between Pooran and Sudharsan, this isn't a comparison of who is more valuable to their team.

For starters, Pooran strides out at No. 3, behind the aggressive opening pair of Mitchell Marsh and Aiden Markram, with Lucknow Super Giants packing most of their explosive power in the top half of their batting order. New skipper Rishabh Pant has yet to catch fire but behind Pooran, there is no shortage of batting muscle - Ayush Badoni, David Miller, Abdul Samad. This is a fearsome group of ball-strikers in a tournament where every team, with the exception of CSK, seems to have assiduously assembled fearsome groups of ball-strikers.

Gujarat Titans aren't an exception, by any stretch of the imagination. On paper, they might not *appear* to possess the same depth when it comes to scoring rapidly but of their six batters who have faced at least 30 balls this season, skipper Shubman Gill's strike rate of 149.64 is the least. One would think that in a line-up that, Gill apart, boasts Jos Buttler, Sherfane Rutherford and Shahrukh Khan, Sudharsan would be the fulcrum around whom the rest would operate. But astonishingly, for want of a better word, it is the Tamil Nadu left-hander who tops the boundary-hitting charts for his franchise, with 31 fours and 13 sixes from 217 deliveries faced.

Sudharsan's IPL career graph is the perfect illustration of how to marry consistency with authority, how to make the most of experience gained and situations encountered, how to keep growing better and better and finding novel methods of keeping oneself a step ahead of the opposition in these days of constant scrutiny and supreme dependence on data and analytics. Each edition of the IPL has been more fruitful numerically than the previous one - he is now in his fourth season - but more than the quantum of runs, it is the manner in which he has made them that has been impressive.

It is inevitable that batters will need to improvise - some might point to Virat Kohli, unfairly, and say that he is pretty much the poster boy for batting orthodoxly in 20-over cricket without any drop in returns or efficacy but the former Indian skipper can't be the norm in any cricketing discussion – in the T20 format, and especially those who have cut their teeth bang in the middle of the 20-over revolution, unlike a Kohli. Sudarshan is nearly a decade and a half younger than Kohli and therefore is more of an offspring of the 20-over revolution than Kohli will ever be, but that doesn't mean that he goes to the reverse sweep or the switch hit at the drop of a hat.

In Royal Challengers Bengaluru's first home game of the season on April 2, Sudharsan made a polished 49 at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on April 2, one of the driving forces behind his team's nonchalant assault on the hosts' 169 for eight. During his time in the middle until he ceded centre-stage to Buttler and Rutherford, Sudharsan lit up the venue with several wondrous strokes. There were muscular pulls and rasping square-cuts; his only six came when he walked across his stumps and paddled a full, fast ball from Josh Hazlewood to fine-leg for six. It was a terrific piece of improvisation, bold and adventurous and a grand example of the spectrum that traverses risk and reward. But the connoisseurs who watched that game at the ground and on television would have been delighted at Sudharsan's choice of the stroke that had given him the greatest joy.

Subliminal effect

That came a ball after the six. Somewhat overcompensating for having bowled so full and on leg, Hazlewood pulled his length back and sent down a good delivery, potentially headed to the top of the off-stump. Sudharsan was prepared. An initial movement translated into a forward press and he punched the ball on the up past the Aussie quick, sending it racing off the pitch to the straight boundary with minimal effort and subliminal effect. It was a stroke that had 'class' written all over it, class that has been a Sudharsan ally for a long time now.

This season, Sudharsan has four half-centuries and the aforementioned 49 from six innings. If that's not a sign of consistency, then little else is. Despite all this, he may not be even close to the fringes of the Indian T20 team, such is the depth that Ajit Agarkar and Suryakumar Yadav and Gautam Gambhir can pick from. The queue, especially within the batting community, to break into the T20 set-up is long, winding, seemingly endless. Sudharsan is smart enough to understand the futility of trying to second-guess the decision-makers, of the follies of attempting to figure out if he has done enough to catch and then hold their attention. In his head, that is not even his brief; that revolves around scoring runs of import and impact, of making runs that matter, that buttress the team's cause rather than his own CV and runbank alone.

"It's my fourth year (in the IPL and with GT), it has given me a lot of experience. I got exposed to a few difficult conditions, I got exposed to a lot of quick bowling in the nets. The most important thing which has helped my evolution or the way I've improved my T20 batting is the game time I get here and the practice time I get here with the Titans – with all quality bowlers, all international bowlers, Sudharsan acknowledged the other day.

"That has helped me even from the nets; I've learnt a lot in these three years. And obviously, playing for India, that has helped me even more to understand the game better and the basics of the game as well."Sudharsan has played three One-Day Internationals, all in South Africa in December 2023, making half-centuries in his first two appearances. He didn't bat in his only T20I, against Zimbabwe in Harare last July, but was in the India 'A' squad that travelled to Australia last hundred and produced a sparkling 103 in the second innings of the first unofficial 'Test' against the hosts in Mackay. Surprisingly for someone with such strong grounding in the basics, very good awareness of where his off-stump is and more than decent technique, he only averages 39.93 in 29 first-class games when he is clearly much, much better than those numbers would suggest.

India travel to England for five Tests, the first of them at Headingley from June 20, in the build-up to which the 'A' team will play two four-day games, starting in Canterbury on May 30.

Unless things go horribly wrong, Sudharsan should be on the flight to the English capital sometime towards the third or so week of May, hoping to build on the gains of Australia and hoping to stay in the consciousness of the national selectors. India showed by plucking Devdutt Padikkal from the 'A' squad and fielding him in the XI in Perth Test ahead of reserve opener Abhimanyu Easwaran that they are prepared to look beyond the Bengal captain. Maybe in that lies Sudharsan's chance to stake his claim. Quietly and without fuss, of course.

THE GIST

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2024

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BIAL clarifies on claims of removal of Hindi from display boards

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), operator of Kempegowda International Airport, on Sunday said there has been no change in the flight information display system at the airport.

BIAL issued a statement after social media was abuzz with posts claiming Hindi had been removed from the display boards. This led to debates with netizens supporting and opposing this move.

However, BIAL said, "There has been no change in our flight information display system. In line with established practices, the displays continue to feature English and Kannada to effectively assist passengers. Additionally, signage throughout the terminals are displayed in English, Kannada, and Hindi."

Security incidents in Namma Metro raise concern

BMRCL official says such cases are rare, passenger safety remains top priority

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A routine metro ride turned tense for Vinay Kumar, a resident of Indiranagar when he had a narrow escape from a suspected pickpocketing attempt at Central College metro station. He said the incident happened when he and his wife were waiting for the train. "We noticed a man lurking suspiciously behind me. When we moved to a different door marking, he followed us again," he told *The Hindu*.

Sensing something was not right, the couple quickly switched positions as the train arrived, catching the suspect off guard. "We ran to the last door. The man didn't follow us there, as it would've been too obvious," he added.

"The coaches are crowded now, and there aren't security personnel nearby to complain to," he said.

A file photo of commuters using Namma Metro in Bengaluru.

Two apprehended

Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) officials said personnel from the Karnataka State Industrial Security Force deployed for crowd control during an IPL match at Chinnaswamy Stadium apprehended two youths, who were found with seven stolen mobile phones, at Cubbon Park Metro Station recently. One of them was a minor, and both were handed over to the Cubbon Park police.

In a similar incident, an attempted theft was thwarted at Nadaprabhu Kempegowda (Majestic) Metro Station. According to BMRCL officials, a man identified as Ganesh was caught while trying to steal a mobile phone from a commuter's pocket as they boarded the train on platform 1. A vigilant woman security guard spotted the attempt and intervened promptly. The accused was handed over to Upparpet Police by the metro security team, with assistance from a Hoysala patrol unit, officials added.

'Such incidents rare'

However, a senior BMRCL official downplayed the concerns, stating that incidents of pickpocketing within the Bengaluru metro network remain rare.

"Only a few such pickpocketing incidents have been reported so far. We have CCTV surveillance in place across all stations and inside trains. If any commuter faces an issue, they can lodge a complaint immediately. We assure swift action based on available footage and inputs. Passengers' safety and security remain our top priority," the official said.

Munirathna lodges complaint against DKS alleging corruption

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

BJP MLA from R.R. Nagar, Munirathna, on Sunday lodged a complaint with Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot against Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D.K. Shivakumar alleging corruption in contracts worth ₹2,000 crore to redo storm-water drains (SWDs) in Bengaluru.

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is taking up redoing the SWDs in the city, under a World Bank-funded project.

Speaking to media persons after lodging his complaint with the Raj Bhavan on Sunday, Mr. Munirathna alleged that instead of calling a global tender, which he claimed would have saved money for the city's civic body, Mr. Shivakumar had allegedly not only forced officials to not only call local tenders and had violated many norms of Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act, 1999, but also rigged the tenders to ensure those he preferred get the tenders. He named Star Chandru, Congress' MP candidate from Mandya in 2024, as one of the alleged beneficiaries.

Munirathna

It can be recalled that Mr. Shivakumar and Mr. Munirathna have been at loggerheads ever since the latter switched to the BJP from Congress in 2019.

Not the first

This is not the first time Mr. Munirathna has made these allegations. He had written to the central agencies like Directorate of Enforcement (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and the Karnataka Lokayukta, making the same allegations a month ago. He had also written to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, appealing to remove Mr. Shivakumar as the Bengaluru Development Minister.

Mr. Munirathna said he will also file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) challenging these tenders in the High Court on Tuesday.

When media persons sought a response from Mr. Shivakumar to the complaint by Mr. Munirathna, he shot back that the police were yet to carry out a mahazar in Vidhana Soudha, referring to a rape case against the BJP MLA in which the victim has alleged that Mr. Munirathna raped her in the minister's chambers in Vidhana Soudha, when he was a Minister in the erstwhile BJP government.

CID officer indicted in abetment to suicide case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The investigation report submitted to the High Court by the Special Investigation Team indicted Kanakalakshmi, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), for allegedly botching up the investigation, which led to the death of advocate Jeeva, accused in the Bhovi Corporation Scam.

The officer was earlier booked for abetment to suicide. The team constituted by the High Court in December last year, comprising CBI SP Vinayak Verma, DCPs Hakay Akshay Machindra and Nisha James, probed the case in detail and submitted a report, which the court appreciated on record.

The High Court stated in its order, "in perusal of the report indicates that the SIT had performed a commendable job in executing the order/directions towards the conduct of a fair investigation". The court also pointed out that the appreciation should not be mistaken for the merit of the investigation, but only for how the investigation is conducted.

The deceased, Jeeva, one of the accused in the Bhovi Corporation scam, ended her life on November 21, 2024, leaving behind a 13-page note accusing Kanakalakshmi, DySP, CID, of forcing her to strip during an interrogation, mentally harassing her, and demanding a ₹25 lakh bribe. She even filed a complaint with the High Court 10 days before taking the extreme step. The court took a strong exception following her death and constituted a SIT comprising of officials from both the State and Central agency, which is one of its first kinds.

The SIT arrested the accused officer on March 11 based on the findings.

Ugadi Vasantha Sambhrama

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ugadi Vasantha Sambhrama, a unique fusion fest of music, food, and culture, was organised by Revenue Minister Krishna Byregowda at Sahakaranagar Gounds on Sunday to mark the heralding of Ugadi.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Krishna Byregowda said Ugadi, should be heralded in a meaningful manner through the celebration of cultural heritage.

The day-long event featured *Karunadu Swada,* a celebration of State's rich culinary heritage, through which MTR Foods brought to the fore various forgotten recipes and regional delicacies.

The event also saw *Bhaava dhaare,* a rendition of Kannada songs by noted artists in addition to a talk show by Kannada orator Krishne Gowda.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
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Name of the work with its location
E-Auction Catalogue No. ATM-BGM-DWR-25
The Award of contract for a period of Five (5) years, Installation of ATM at Belgavi (BGM) & Dharwad (DWR) Railway Stations over Hubballi Division.
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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
EOI Tender Notice No.: B/MD/LP/Emp/2025 Dated 03.04.2025
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites Expression of Interest for **"Empanelment of Diagnostic Centers"** for providing special diagnostic services as below:
Name and Description
A. Providing special Laboratory medicine services and other special investigations as required by Railways for a period of two years at CGHS (Bengaluru) rates or lower rates.
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BatEchoMon: India's first automated bat monitoring, detection system

BatEchoMon is programmed to activate at sunset, when bats begin flying, and continuously listens and analyses audio. Its Raspberry Pi microprocessor processes data captured by an ultrasonic detector, isolating bat calls from other noises, and then uses a neural network to identify the species

Nikhil Sreekandan

For her PhD research, bat biologist Kadambari Deshpande made overnight recordings of bat echolocation calls in the Western Ghats. A "good night" would generate about 30 GB of data from 11 hours of recording with a bat detector. To process the data, Deshpande would go through several one-minute recordings, scanning every millisecond for bat calls, and make notes on the species and other information on their behaviour and ecology.

"It took me 11 months to process 20 nights of data," Deshpande said. "BatEchoMon can probably give me that in a few hours."

BatEchoMon, short for 'Bat Echolocation Monitoring,' is an autonomous system capable of detecting and analysing bat calls in real-time. It is India's first automated bat monitoring system, developed by Deshpande and Vedant Barje under the guidance of Jagdish Krishnaswamy, at the Long-Term Urban Ecological Observatory in the School of Environment and Sustainability at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), Bengaluru.

Deshpande is a postdoctoral fellow at the Observatory and the School; Barje, who leads the WildTech Project at the Wildlife Conservation Trust, is a consultant there.

BatEchoMon marks a new chapter for bat research in the country, according to Deshpande. The monitoring system allows scientists who study bats to "go beyond data processing and towards asking interesting questions about bat ecology."

"Not only will it lead to a smoother workflow, it will help people transition to recording bats in different parts of the country, allowing us to gain more insights on the natural history and ecology of different bat species," Rohit Chakravarty, a bat researcher and conservationist at the Nature Conservation Foundation, said.

"I don't know of any device internationally with an inbuilt recording plus call classifying unit. If my knowledge serves me well, BatEchoMon is a milestone in bat research globally."

The bat in the machine

Aside from a recording device, BatEchoMon includes components to record, store, process, and analyse species-wise bat activity on the fly. "In [BatEchoMon], Audiomoth, a popular low-cost ultrasonic detector, has been configured to work as an ultrasonic microphone," Barje said.

BatEchoMon is programmed to activate automatically at sunset, when bats begin flying, and continuously listens and analyses audio. The device's brain is a Raspberry Pi microprocessor, which processes the data captured by Audiomoth. "It first isolates bat calls from other ultrasounds, such as those of insects or anthropogenic and environmental noises. Then the peak frequency and structure of a bat call are analysed to match a known pre-trained model, which helps identify the bat species," Deshpande explained.

"The system uses a [convolutional neural network] based algorithm to do this," Barje added. The output from the device is a spectrogram – a visual representation of the frequencies of an audio signal as it varies with time – of all detected bat calls, along with audio recordings of the portions with just the calls. The system also generates statistical data on which species has been most active through the night, which species was active when, and so on.

"Earlier, all of this needed to be interpreted manually, after painstakingly combing through hours of data," Deshpande said.

The Raspberry Pi and its associated processing components are enclosed in a box measuring 200 mm × 80 mm × 80 mm. Other auxiliary components in the device include a solar panel plus battery and a WiFi communication unit for power supply and data transmission, respectively. In the absence of the sun, the device can last for up to eight days, according to Barje. BatEchoMon also has a modular design, and its battery, charging apparatus, and the level of automation and data relay can be customised to the space it is installed in. But the team was reluctant to reveal more about the setup process.

Kadambari Deshpande and Vedant Barje with two BatEchoMon units. VIVEK HASYAGAR

> Currently, the system can identify six to seven common Indian bat species. Going forward, we would like to include as many bat species as possible

'Suddenly, it became possible'

Bat ecology and acoustics is a nascent field in India, with just a handful of bat researchers recording bat calls and analysing them for ecological studies. Global bat-call databases such as ChiroVox and Xeno-Canto have few recordings submitted by Indians.

Deshpande has been using bat detectors since 2008 and has observed their evolution worldwide. In Europe, she said, detectors equipped with the associated software and reference libraries have saved scientists a lot of time. Since then she has wanted to develop something similar, but customised for the insectivorous bats that are more common in India.

After a chance meeting with fellow researcher Barje, the duo started iterating through numerous designs, different microprocessors, algorithms, and power solutions – before arriving at the current version of BatEchoMon.

The core system of BatEchoMon costs a third of advanced detectors and similar systems, according to Barje. He didn't wish to disclose exact numbers, however.

The main challenge

In the last few months, BatEchoMon has successfully completed pilot tests in an IIHS site in Nashik. The team plans to test it for longer durations and in diverse conditions as well as to beta test the device with select users outside the organisation.

BatEchoMon's primary obstacle is the limited availability of reference libraries for the calls of many bat species. "Currently, the system can identify six to seven common Indian bat species. Going forward, we would like to include as many bat species as possible," Deshpande said.

They also said they hope the device in its present form will be able to identify the species commonly seen in urban, peri-urban, and human-modified forested areas. The main challenge is to create robust training datasets to make good detection models for different species.

Fortunately, collaborations among Indian researchers are improving because of initiatives like the 'State of India's Bats' workshop conducted by the Nature Conservation Foundation and Bat Conservation International, according to Chakravarty.

(Nikhil Sreekandan is an independent journalist. nsreekandan@gmail.com)

THE GIST

BatEchoMon can detect and analyse bat calls in real-time. It is India's first automated bat monitoring system, developed by Kadambari Deshpande and Vedant Barje at the Long-Term Urban Ecological Observatory in Bengaluru

The developers say the system allows scientists to progress towards asking questions about bat ecology, and will help people transition to recording bats in other parts of the country

The output from the device is a spectrogram of all detected bat calls, along with audio of just the calls. The system also generates statistics on which species has been most active. Earlier, all of this needed to be interpreted manually

BIG SHOT

A herd of deer cools off under a sprinkler in its enclosure amid heatwave conditions at the National Zoological Park, in New Delhi, on April 9, 2025. PTI

WHAT IS IT?

Zoos: not just a showcase

Associated Press

At the Barcelona Zoo, a 40-year-old African elephant places her foot through the metal barrier where a zookeeper gently scrubs the sole — the beloved pachyderm gets her "pedicure," along with apple slices every day.

The treatment is part of the zoo's specialised geriatric care for aging animals that cannot be reintroduced into the wild as zoos worldwide increasingly emphasise lifelong care.

Zoos have undergone a rethink in recent decades with the emphasis on the conservation of species and education, moving away from the paradigm in which exotic animals are displayed as a spectacle.

The new approach includes knowing how to adapt to the needs of aging animals, which has led zoos to create bigger, more nature-like enclosures, such as the Sahel-Savannah area at the zoo in the Spanish city of Barcelona.

Along with breeding programmes to reintroduce fit animals into nature, zoos today want to ensure that animals living longer due to advancements in veterinary care can age gracefully, said Martín Zordan, CEO of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Two old African elephants, Bully (left) and Susi, at the Barcelona Zoo in Spain on March 27, 2025. AP

Zordan said that just like older people, elderly animals require more care: regular health checks, arthritis treatment, softer foods or nutritional supplements, adapted living spaces, and monitoring of mental and behavioral health.

"We care about these animals living comfortably and leading lives with dignity," Zordan said.

Several zoos in the United States also highlight their treatment of older animals, such as those in Baltimore and Baton Rouge.

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with the subject 'Daily page'

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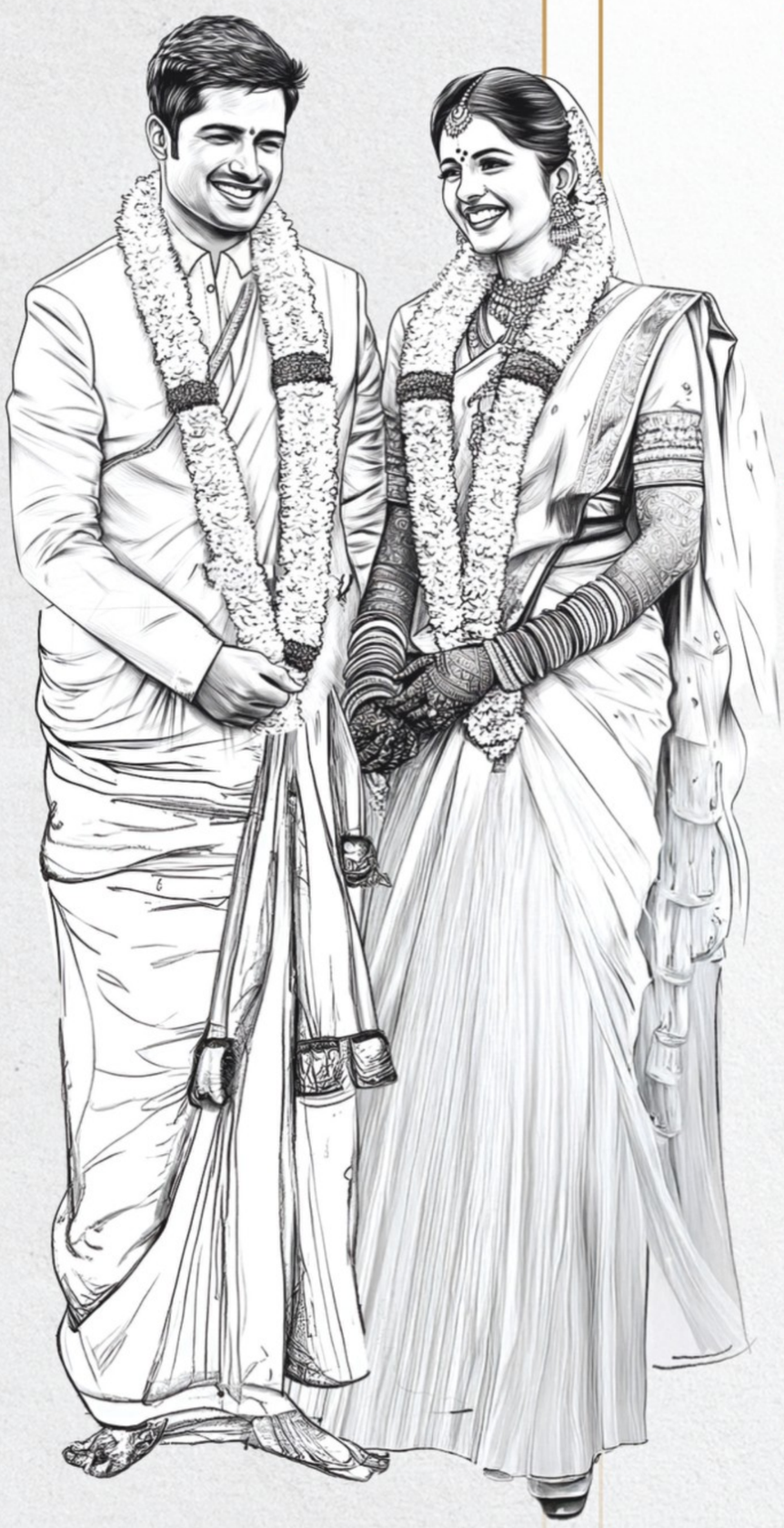

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J BG-BGE

State records 751 road accidents by minors

The figures, compiled from the iRAD, place Tamil Nadu at the top with 2,063 such cases, followed by M.P. and Maharashtra between 2023 and 2024

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

Despite strict legal provisions prohibiting minors from operating vehicles, Karnataka has recorded a worrying 751 road accidents caused by individuals below the age of 18, between 2023 and 2024, making it the sixth-highest in India, according to data from the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

The figures, compiled from the Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD), place Tamil Nadu at the top with 2,063 such cases, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The data has raised alarm among road safety experts and law enforcement authorities, who have called for stricter enforcement and greater public awareness.

The data has raised alarm among road safety experts and law enforcement authorities, who have called for stringent measures and greater public awareness. FILE PHOTO

A senior traffic police officer from Bengaluru noted that while the legal framework exists to deter underage driving, enforcement and societal accountability remain key challenges.

"With Karnataka witnessing a steady rise in vehicular population and increasing urban congestion, we are intensifying awareness drives and cracking down on underage drivers," the official said.

In Bengaluru, the traffic police recently conducted a special month-long drive targeting wheeling offences from March 1 to 31. A total of 398 cases were booked, out of which 82 involved minors.

Accidents caused by minors

Top 8 States	
Tamil Nadu	2,063
Madhya Pradesh	1,138
Maharashtra	1,067
Uttar Pradesh	935
Andhra Pradesh	766
Karnataka	751
Gujarat	727
Kerala	645

Source: Integrated Road Accident Database, Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Authorities initiated action against 68 guardians for negligence, and filed 32 cases under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. To further deter repeat offenders, police sent 40 driving licences for suspension and forwarded 197 vehicle registration certificates for cancellation. "These measures aim not only to penalise, but also to create a sense of responsibility among parents and vehicle owners," the official added.

Under Section 199A of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, if a minor is caught driving, the parent or guardian and the owner of the vehicle can be held criminally liable. The law mandates up to three years of imprisonment, a fine of ₹25,000, cancellation of the vehicle's registration for one year, and a bar on the minor from obtaining a driving licence until the age of 25, according to police.

"If a minor causes an accident or is caught driving, it's not just the child who is at fault. The law clearly states that the parents or whoever owns the vehicle will be held responsible," said another senior traffic police officer.

The growing number of such cases has raised concern among road safety advocates, who point to a broader cultural issue – minors operating two-wheelers or even cars without valid licences, or formal training.

"We are seeing an alarming trend where access to vehicles is granted to children without considering the consequences," said traffic expert Prof. M .N. Srihari.

He emphasised the need for stronger deterrents and suggested further policy interventions, including community-based initiatives to educate families about the dangers of underage driving.

"More stringent measures and active community engagement may be key to curbing this worrying trend," he added.

Man attempts to immolate himself in front of Raj Bhavan

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Allegedly upset over harassment from his wife, a 26-year-old software engineer tried to set himself on fire in front of Raj Bhavan on Sunday evening.

The accused, identified as Zubair, a resident of Hebbal, was detained by security personnel and handed over to the jurisdictional Vidhana Soudha police for further action.

According to the police, the incident occurred around 4.30 p.m. on Sunday. Zubair poured petrol upon himself at the entrance of the Raj Bhavan in a bid to immolate himself. The security personnel, who were present at the spot, immediately threw water over Zubair and later detained him.

Zubair, who tried to immolate himself in front of Raj Bhavan in Bengaluru on Sunday, after being rescued by security personnel. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Zubair told the police that he was dejected as his wife had filed a dowry harassment case against him in Chickaballapur and also assaulted him. He claimed that police refused to file an assault case against his wife.

Man on the run in molestation case arrested in Kerala

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ten days after the incident, South East Division police, on Sunday, tracked down a 29-year-old cab driver in Kozhikode, Kerala, who was on the run after molesting a girl walking home along with her friend late in the night on April 3 in Suddaguntepalya.

The accused was identified as Santosh D. The accused molested one of the girls and fled the scene, the police said. The police had filed a *suo motu* case based on the CCTV camera footage.

According to the police, while the victim did not lodge a complaint, the incident was caught in a CCTV camera installed outside a house in the area. The house owner alerted the police after he came across the recordings.

The police analysed footage from over 150 CCTV cameras to identify the accused. The accused fled to Hosur after the CCTV footage was widely shared on social media platforms. At Hosur, the accused stayed in a friend's house before boarding a bus to Kozhikode in Kerala.

All eyes on 'Karaga'

Priest V. Jnanendra, carrying the sacred flower pot 'Karaga' on his head during a procession as part of the Karaga festival at Dharmaraya Swamy Temple in Bengaluru on Sunday. K. MURALI KUMAR

40 sheds gutted in fire at labourers' colony

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

As many as 40 makeshift sheds were gutted after an accidental fire broke out at the labourers' colony at Veerannapalya in Govindapura in Bengaluru on Saturday night.

However, no one was injured in the accident.

Residents of the colony, employed in a toy factory and daily wagers from other parts of the State, rushed to the safety along with their family members, as soon as they spotted the fire at one of the sheds.

The fire soon engulfed adjacent sheds, destroying goods and material worth several lakhs. The cause of fire is yet to be ascertained.

Sweets to be distributed in State prisons on Ambedkar Jayanti, Buddha Poornima

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Prisons dept. has already listed 15 such occasions in a year to provide sweets to inmates

Following a demand from a city-based social activist, the State government has issued an order directing the Department of Prisons and Correctional Services to distribute sweets to prison inmates on Ambedkar Jayanti and Buddha Poornima.

According to the government order, the Department of Prisons and Correctional Services has listed 15 such occasions in a year to provide sweets to inmates. These include Republic Day, Ugadi, Basava Jayanthi, Independence Day, Ramazan, Vijaya Dashami, Gandhi Jayanthi, Kannada Rajyotsava, Christmas, New Year, Bakrid, Sankranti, Deepawali, and Gauri Ganesha festivals. Considering the two other important events being ignored, T. Narasimhamurthy filed a petition demanding to include Ambedkar Jayanti and Buddha Poornima in the list, as a tribute to their contribution to social justice, equality and rights of marginalised.

Considering the appeal, the State government has decided to include the two events to provide sweets for the inmates every year on April 14 and May 12.

IIMB–RERI and BAF collaborate to empower apartment RWAs for community leadership

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

What are the key challenges apartment managing committees face while one committee hands over to the other? How can older apartments accommodate electric vehicle (EV) charging stations on their premises? A few problems like these and the potential solutions to them were presented by members of various Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) of Bengaluru at the valedictory session of the Certificate Programme for Resident Welfare Association (RWA) office bearers, hosted by the Real Estate Research Initiative (RERI) at Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), in collaboration with the Bangalore Apartments' Federation (BAF) on Sunday.

Participants of IIMB-RERI - BAF workshop at IIMB on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The idea of this programme stemmed when Venkatesh Panchapagesan, Chairperson, RERI, and Vikram Rai, president, Bangalore Apartment Federation (BAF) who had previously worked on many projects together decided to bring together people who have the mindset, knowledge and network to get empowered and contribute to the governance of their communities. After a year of meticulous planning, the programme began a few weeks ago.

"The intent is to build capacity and community through structured training and a strong network with BAF, so residents feel empowered to take on leadership roles in their communities. Often, only a handful of residents step up to lead. While the goals are shared, self-governance remains a challenge," Prof. Panchapagesan said.

The first cohort of this programme consisted of 23 members representing apartments with only 20 units to over 3,000 units. While some of them volunteered for the programme, a few others were handpicked by RERI and BAF.

RWA governance, including the legal framework for Management Committees (MCs), financial planning and budgeting, capital project execution, vendor and soft systems management, water and IT systems, multi-stakeholder communication, and compliance management were some of the topics covered in the sessions which were held every Sunday for four weeks along with technical functioning of key infrastructure components such as electrical systems, fire safety, lift operations, and sewage treatment plants.

On Sunday, the cohort who were divided into groups deliberated on the real-world issues faced by apartment managing committees. While providing potential solutions to these problems, for instance, creation of formalised SOPs or documents to pass on information when a managing committee handover to the next, surveys before setting up EV stations, the groups also released handbooks and guides which can help other apartment RWAs.

On whether the course will help influence how communities are managed going forward, Deepak Barolia, representing Icon Happy Living Apartments, said, "We are now better prepared for crises. The clarity on compliance also helps us engage with government officials more confidently."

RERI and BAF are still working out the details of when a new cohort will be admitted, if the programme will be expanded to gated communities and non-apartment RWAs etc. They also plan to increase the involvement of civic agencies in the programme through a two-way communication passage.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, APR. 14	
RISE	06:08
SET	18:32
RISE	19:40
SET	06:42
TUESDAY, APR. 15	
RISE	06:07
SET	18:32
RISE	20:29
SET	07:21
WEDNESDAY, APR. 16	
RISE	06:07
SET	18:32
RISE	21:22
SET	08:04

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	25
Mysuru	34	20
Bengaluru	34	21

Bengaluru Today
34°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant. Mostly dry weather to prevail.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C The weather will be warm. Night will be pleasant. Chances of light rain and thundershower with gusty winds.

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THE HINDU
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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of people killed in Russia's missile attack on Sumy

20 More than 20 people were killed in a Russian missile strike on the Ukrainian city of Sumy on Sunday. Two ballistic missiles struck the heart of the city at around 10:15 a.m. as people gathered to celebrate Palm Sunday. At least 83 people, including seven children, were injured. AP

Palestinians killed since the ceasefire collapsed on March 18

1,574 An Israeli air strike damaged one of the few functioning hospitals in Gaza, as the Israeli military said it targeted a Hamas "command and control centre" operating in the facility. Gaza's health ministry said that at least 1,574 had been killed since March 18. AFP

Complaints registered on the cyber crime helpline number 1930

1 lakh. The helpline number 1930 has become a potent weapon in the Mumbai police's fight against cybercrime in the last three years, with the number of complaints crossing the one lakh figure this week and the amount saved on behalf of victims standing at a whopping ₹241 crore. PTI

Share of vacant posts across departments in Kashmir University

20 In per cent. Nearly 20% of the 2,859 sanctioned posts in the University of Kashmir were lying vacant as on February 2024, the varsity said in response to an application filed under the Right to Information Act (RTI), highlighting significant staff shortage across departments. PTI

India's coal imports during the April-February period

240.7 In million tonnes. India's coal import dropped marginally by 1.4% to 240.77 million tonnes in the April-February period of FY25. India's coal import was 244.27 million tonnes in the year-ago period. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Will Trump's tariffs bring in a recession?

U.S. President Trump declared on April 2 that the U.S. would henceforth be charging a minimum of 10% tariff on all its imports. While the markets recoiled with horror at the scale of the tariff increases, China has vowed to 'fight till the end' in what may turn out to be a prolonged and bitter trade war

ECONOMIC NOTES

Jayan Jose Thomas

The U.S. has been the greatest champion of free trade and the chief architect of globalisation since the middle of the 20th century. However, in a stunning reversal of roles, U.S. President Donald Trump unleashed a carpet bombing of the global trading system on April 2, which he declared as "Liberation Day".

The U.S. tariff, or the tax America levies on imports from other countries, was 2 to 3% for two decades until 2024 (Chart 1). However, President Trump declared on April 2 that the U.S. would henceforth be charging a minimum of 10% tariff on all its imports. Imports from about 60 countries will have a significantly higher-level tariff – which is being described as "reciprocal" tariffs. These include tariffs of 20% on the European Union (EU), 27% on India, and 46% on Vietnam.

Tariffs of 25% were imposed in February itself on Mexico and Canada, the U.S.'s neighbours and two of its largest trading partners. But the biggest jolt has been the tariff imposed on China, which supplies one-sixth of all foreign goods the U.S. consumes. Imports from China to the U.S., as of April 11, will now face tariffs of 145% (Table 1).

The markets recoiled with horror at the scale of the tariff increases and their uncertainty. Stock markets nosedived. China has retaliated, returning each tariff blow with equal ferocity. It has imposed 125% tariffs on imports from the U.S. There is a distinct possibility that the U.S. and the world are heading towards a painful economic recession. On April 9, President Trump reversed some of his decisions, announcing a 90-day pause on "reciprocal" tariffs for most countries while insisting that the steep tariffs on China would take immediate effect.

A commodity with a price tag of $100 imported from (say, Vietnam) would have cost $103 in the U.S. market if tariffs were 3%. However, the same good must be purchased for $146 when the newly announced tariffs take effect. Tariffs protect domestic industries from foreign competition but may lead to price increases.

'Make America Great Again'

With its high per capita income and low tariffs, the U.S. has been the largest export market for goods from cars to computers, aiding the creation of manufacturing jobs in several countries. In 2022, China exported goods worth $576 billion to the U.S., but the U.S., in return, could sell only $154 billion worth of goods to China (Table 2). Overall, the U.S. had a trade deficit of $1,311 billion, or 5% of its gross domestic product (GDP), in 2022. America has managed to continue buying more from the world than what it sells because of the dollar's position as the dominant international currency. That is primarily thanks to China, which continues to back dollar-denominated assets, storing significant portions of its large export surpluses in U.S. treasury bonds. Such a mutually beneficial relationship between the two largest economic powers has been the key driver of the globalisation of trade and finance since the 2000s.

However, globalisation creates inequalities not only in the developing but also in the developed world. In the U.S., sectors such as steel and automobiles have been among the most hit by import competition.

Chart 1: Average tariffs (in %)
The trade weighed averages of Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) duties imposed by each country

Table 1: U.S. tariffs on selected countries and their export-GDP ratios

	U.S. tariffs (%), as of April 9, 2025	Exports as % of GDP
India	**27***	**21.8**
China	145	19.7
Canada	25	33.4
Mexico	25	36.0
Vietnam	46*	87.2
South Korea	26*	44.0

*Yet to take effect due to the 90-day pause

Table 2: U.S.'s trade with major trading partners in 2022 (in $ billion)

Partner Name	Export	Import	Trade Balance
All countries	2,062	3,373	-1,311
China	154	576	-422
Mexico	324	459	-135
Canada	355	447	-92
Japan	80	154	-74
Germany	73	150	-78
Vietnam	11	136	-124
South Korea	71	121	-49
India	**47**	**91**	**-44**
United Kingdom	77	65	13
Thailand	16	63	-47

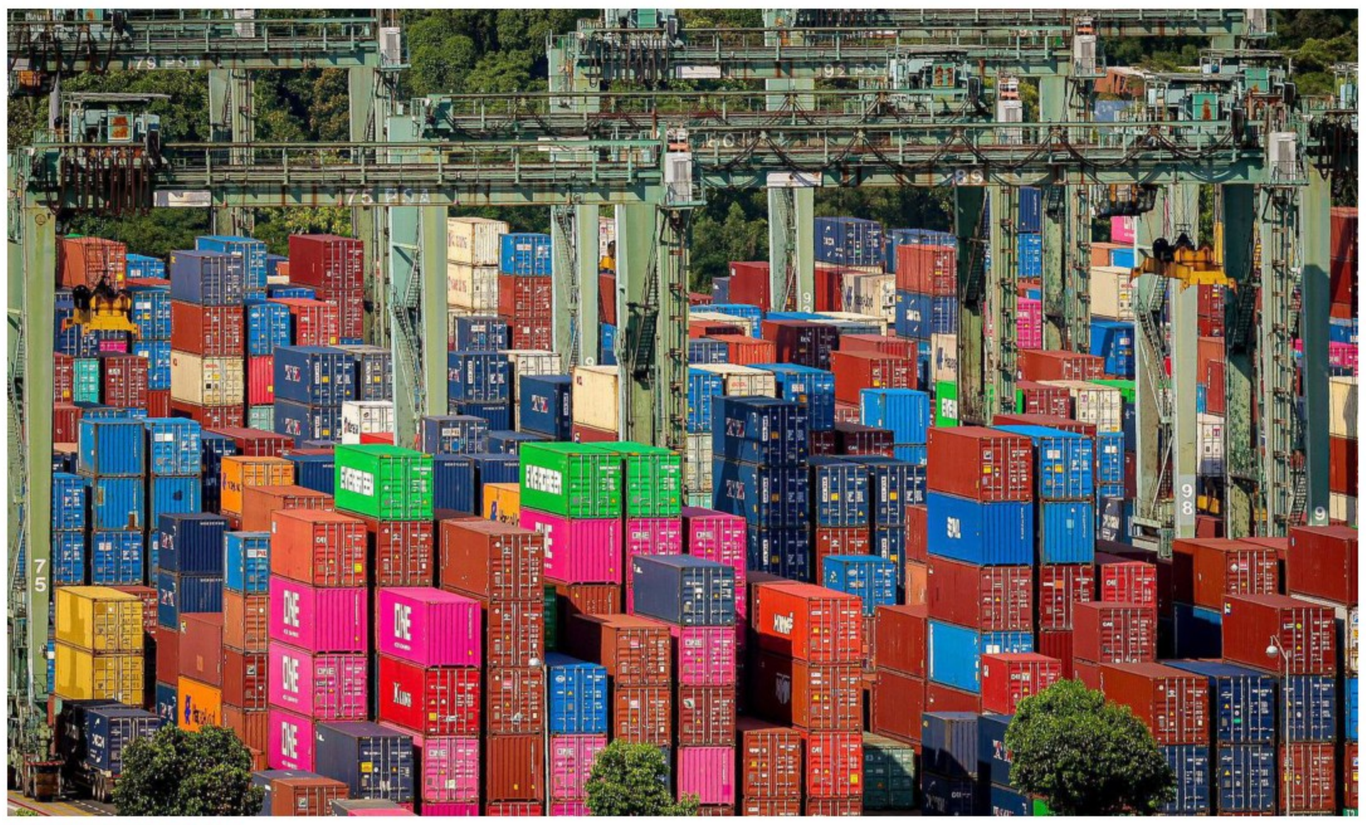
Sources: World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), The World Bank, World Trade Organization STATS, WTO, World Development Indicators, The New York Times.

THE GIST

With its high per capita income and low tariffs, the U.S. has been the largest export market for goods from cars to computers, aiding the creation of manufacturing jobs in several countries.

From now on, imports from about 60 countries will have a significantly higher level tariff — which is being described as "reciprocal" tariffs. These include tariffs of 20% on the European Union (EU), 27% on India, and 46% on Vietnam.

President Trump calls India a 'tariff king', referring to the marked increase in India's tariffs since 2018.



Trade disruptions ahead: Gantry cranes stand as containers stack below at Brani Terminal, operated by the PSA (Port of Singapore Authority) International Pte, Singapore on April 12. GETTY IMAGES

The resentment of the workers in these sectors – many of whom are white, middle-aged men – has been one of the factors that helped propel Mr. Trump to the U.S. presidency in 2016 and again in 2024. President Trump has promised to revive U.S. manufacturing, protecting it from competitors who, in earlier years, were allowed to "rip off" America with their imports.

Without a doubt, President Trump is playing with fire. With the higher tariffs, prices of most goods, especially consumer goods, will move upward, inflicting pain on ordinary Americans. It is doubtful if American firms can lift their production capabilities to serve at least a part of the demand created for them by making imports costlier.

China's gamble

China has vowed to "fight till the end" in what may turn out to be a prolonged and bitter trade war. Such bravado is backed by the fact that China has been quietly preparing for such a showdown for over a decade, gradually reducing its dependence on the U.S. economy. The proportion of exports to GDP has declined steeply in China, from 35% in 2012 to 19.7% in 2023. As a proportion of its total exports, China's exports to the U.S. have fallen, too, from 21% in 2006 to 16.2% in 2022. China has invested hugely in science, technology, and innovation, particularly in artificial intelligence and electric cars. This has been done partly in response to the U.S.'s restrictions on technology transfer to China. China bypassed U.S. tariffs earlier by shifting production to its East Asian neighbours (especially Vietnam), with which it built deep economic networks.

India's options

President Trump calls India a 'tariff king', referring to the marked increase in India's tariffs since 2018 (Chart 1). The biggest chunk of India's exports is sold to the U.S. ($91 billion in 2022), and they are critical for meeting the country's large import bill. Therefore, any reduction in India's export earnings following tariff escalation will be keenly felt. At the same time, as exports form a relatively small share (21.8%) of its GDP, the impact of the tariff increases may be less in India than in many other countries (Table 1). Also, there has been no increase in tariffs on pharmaceuticals and services, two of India's major export items to the U.S.

The narrowness of its manufacturing capabilities is the biggest hurdle for India. Tariff protection and the Production Linked Incentive Scheme have not been sufficient to revive this sector. India needs a clear-cut industrial policy and a resurgence in investments to escape the unfolding global turmoil.

Jayan Jose Thomas is a Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi.

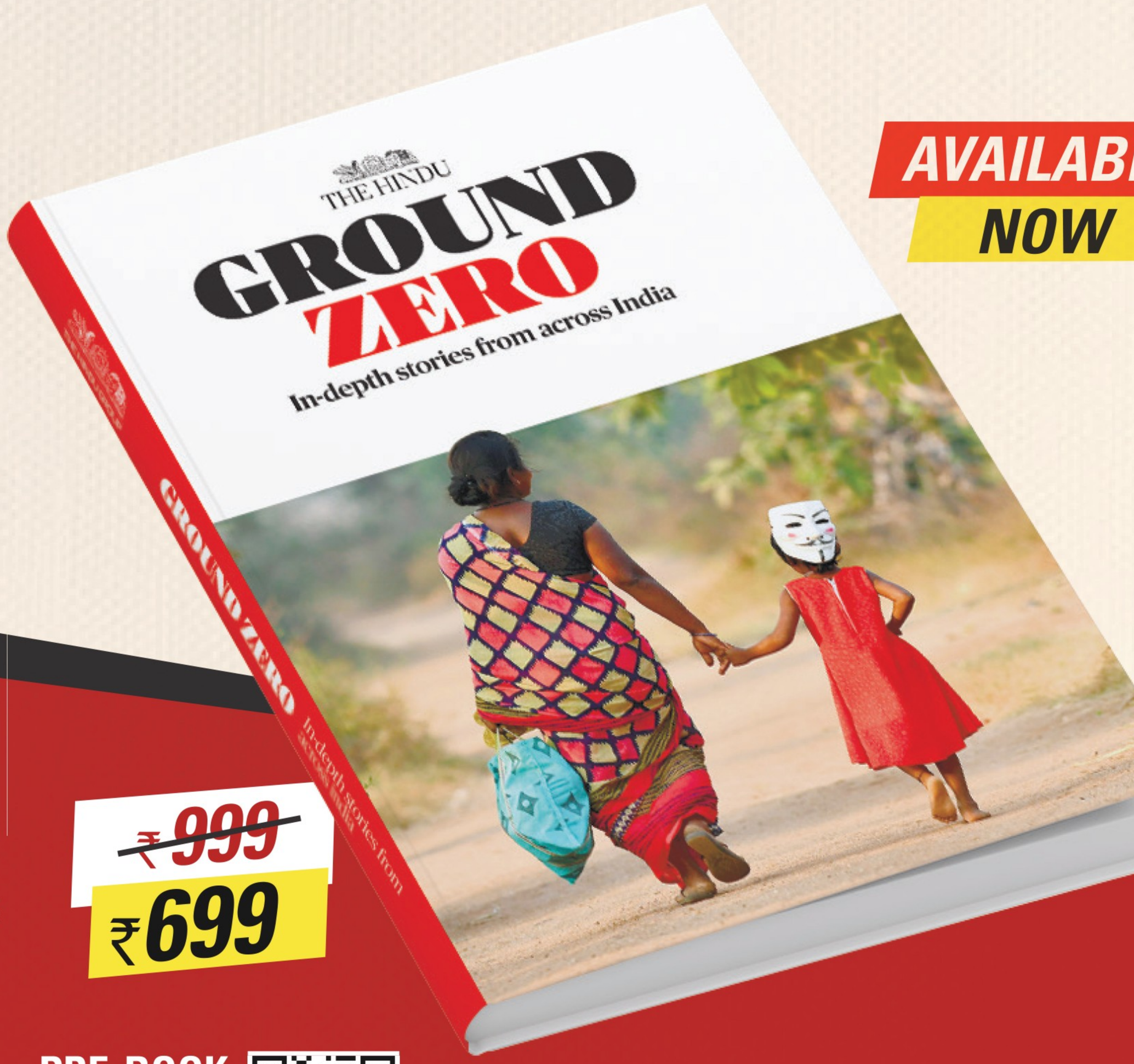
THE HINDU GROUP

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

GROUND ZERO

In-depth stories from across India

Compelling stories from across India are featured in this collection from the 'Ground Zero' section of The Hindu. These capture extensive reportage of the struggles and triumphs of ordinary people in extraordinary situations.



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Re-crafting thinking patterns

Understanding their own needs and development as adult learners can help teachers relate better to their students

T.T. Srinath

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

During a conversation with teachers, which revolved around needs being met or not met by the institution, many 'teachers' expressed unhappiness with some of their fundamental needs being unmet. These included aspects that Abraham Maslow, a psychologist in the 1950s, defined as "Hierarchy of Needs". Maslow's theory postulates that human needs operate at five levels in the form of a pyramid. At the bottom are basic or physiological needs, such as food and clothing. From here, an individual rises through four other layers to the top where one 'self-actualises' and 'realises one's purpose in life.'

How we view things

Many teachers were stuck at Level 3: the need for love and belonging. To help them understand the way they think and how that could impact the way they behave and teach, I use a model developed by Robert Kegan, an American developmental psychologist. He explained that developing as an adult was not about learning new things but about transforming the way we view things.

In Kegan's model, which also follows a pyramidal structure, the bottom is classified as an 'impulsive mind', which is limited by our ability to consider other perspectives. This is similar to what Maslow says is our 'psychological need' for self-preservation.

Kegan explains that an adult's thinking graduates from the bottom and rises through four layers to the top, as the individual evolves into what he describes as having a 'transforming mindset', characterised by a capacity to learn and grow, which parallels Maslow's 'self-actualisation' state.

When the two models were explained, the teachers recognised that their need for love and belonging bore heavily on what Kegan calls 'Socialised Mind', which was Level 3 in the pyramid and reflected a need for external validation. When invited to explore their thought processes, many understood that their thinking was affected by their felt need.

As teachers whose essential task is to impart knowledge, which is largely cognitive, they observed that their manner of communicating with children was affected by the state of their mind, which in itself was impacted by whether their personal needs were met or not. Reflecting primarily on their behaviour towards students, the teachers understood that their thoughts, and therefore behaviours, were showing up as being deficient or growth-oriented because of their fundamental human need being met or not.

Connecting with children

When imparting knowledge to children, the teachers realised that if they were aware of the human need they were experiencing in the 'Present', it would help them connect with children with self-compassion. Many realised that they were numb to this aspect simply because they were executing their roles as teachers from a task perspective and were divorced from appreciating their own state of mind. Hence recognising how the hierarchy of needs was playing out in them and affecting their thinking provided them a handle to appreciate how personal transformation can take place.

The teachers also sensed that their evolving thoughts and needs were not strictly linear with one need leading to the next but that multiple needs were present at the same time. These affected their thoughts and manifested in their behaviour and communication in class.

At the end of the session, the teachers wished to understand the Kegan model better, as it explained to them that developing as an 'adult learner' involved personal transformation and changing the manner in which they view the world, rather than learning new things.

In conclusion, Kegan's model combined with Maslow's hierarchy of needs lays out a clear path on how we may re-craft our patterns of thinking and cultivate a more authentic way of relating as teachers to students.

The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant and visiting professor at the Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai. Email ttsrinath@gmail.com

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Cadence Scholarship
An initiative to support students pursuing higher education.
Eligibility: Indian nationals from lower-income families who are residing and studying in Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Pune, Ahmedabad, or Hyderabad and have scored 60% overall in Class 12. Preference will be given to girls, specially abled or transgender students and those pursuing STEM courses.
Reward: Support for educational expenses
Application: Online
Deadline: April 30
www.b4s.in/edge/TCSP5

Nutanix Heart Women in Technology Scholarships
An initiative from cloud computing company Nutanix
Eligibility: Female students pursuing a degree in Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, or Computer Engineering for the academic year 2024-25 with a minimum 3.0 GPA who demonstrate excellent communication and leadership abilities with a history of community service and extracurricular involvement.
Reward: Up to $2,000 (one-time).
Application: Online
Deadline: May 30
www.b4s.in/edge/AISDG8

POSE Scholarship
An initiative of the Haryana State Council for Science and Technology, Government of Haryana.
Eligibility: Domiciled residents of Haryana who are in the first year of a UG, PG or Integrated degree in Basic and Natural Science subjects and are not receiving any other scholarship or grant.
Rewards: Up to ₹6,000 per month and one-time grant of up to ₹22,000.
Application: Online
Deadline: May 12
www.b4s.in/edge/PSE6

Courtesy: buddy4study

GMAC Advancery

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) has launched Advancery to guide candidates through their business education journey by offering a personalised approach to programme selection and application strategy. This includes verified programme data from business schools, analysis of online discussions on programme types and formats, personalised skill assessment, comparison of programmes based on location, cost, scholarships, online versus in-person formats, and time commitment and streamlined application process.

Details at advancery.gmac.com/

SAVE THE DATE

Admissions

The **University of Strathclyde,** Glasgow, the U.K., invites applications for its M.Sc. in Advanced Mathematical Modelling.
Eligibility: Minimum second-class (2:2) honours degree or overseas equivalent in Maths, Computer Science, or related discipline with a strong Maths component. Overall IELTS score of 6.0 with no band below 5.5.
https://tinyurl.com/ 5n8nhvem
A webinar will be held on May 15. Visit https://tinyurl.com/ 24396hvc

The **University of Manchester,** the U.K., invites applications for its M.A. in Social Anthropology.
Eligibility: First- or upper-second Bachelor's degree or overseas equivalent in any discipline. Overall IELTS Academic score of 7, with 7 in writing and no other component below 6.5 or equivalents.
https://tinyurl.com/ 6rmcbusx

JAIN Online invites applications for its two-year online MBA programme in Digital Marketing and E-Commerce.
Eligibility: Minimum 50% or equivalent in UG in any stream from a recognised institution.
https://tinyurl.com/ 5n7ymk6m

ITM Institute of Hotel Management announced a Scholarship Programme for 2025. Amount will be based on scholarship exam scores.
Deadline: April 19
https://tinyurl.com/ 4xjpmsd8

World University of Design (WUD), Sonipat, has opened admissions for its UG and PG programmes: B.Tech Computer Science and Design; B.A. Performing Arts (Theatre); M.A. Peforming Arts (Theatre); and M.Des in Game Design and Development. It has also introduced two new majors – Entrepreneurship and Data Analytics – for its BBA and MBA programmes.
Eligibility: For UG programmes, minimum 50% in Class 12. B.Tech programmes require IIT-JEE scores and B.Des and M.Des courses need UCEED, NID or NIFT scores.
https://tinyurl.com/4ykaea3w

Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, the U.K., will offer 20 MBA Scholarships for September 2025 in the following subjects: Accounting and Finance, Business, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality and Tourism, Human Resource Management, Management, Management Science, and Marketing.
Eligibility: Self-funded, fee-paying applicants who hold an offer to study a full-time course in 2025-26.
Deadline: July 31
https://tinyurl.com/yrhun2pa

WorldQuant has kicked off the fifth **International Quant Championship**, a global, three-stage, team-based quantitative finance competition. Deadline to register is May 14. Visit https://tinyurl.com/26d768hn for more information.

CACHE

OpenAI's Ghibli-style AI image generator and copyright law

ChatGPT is turning military propaganda, terrorist attacks, and family portraits into Studio Ghibli-style anime pictures, even if it means ignoring Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki's anti-war and anti-AI beliefs

Sahana Venugopal

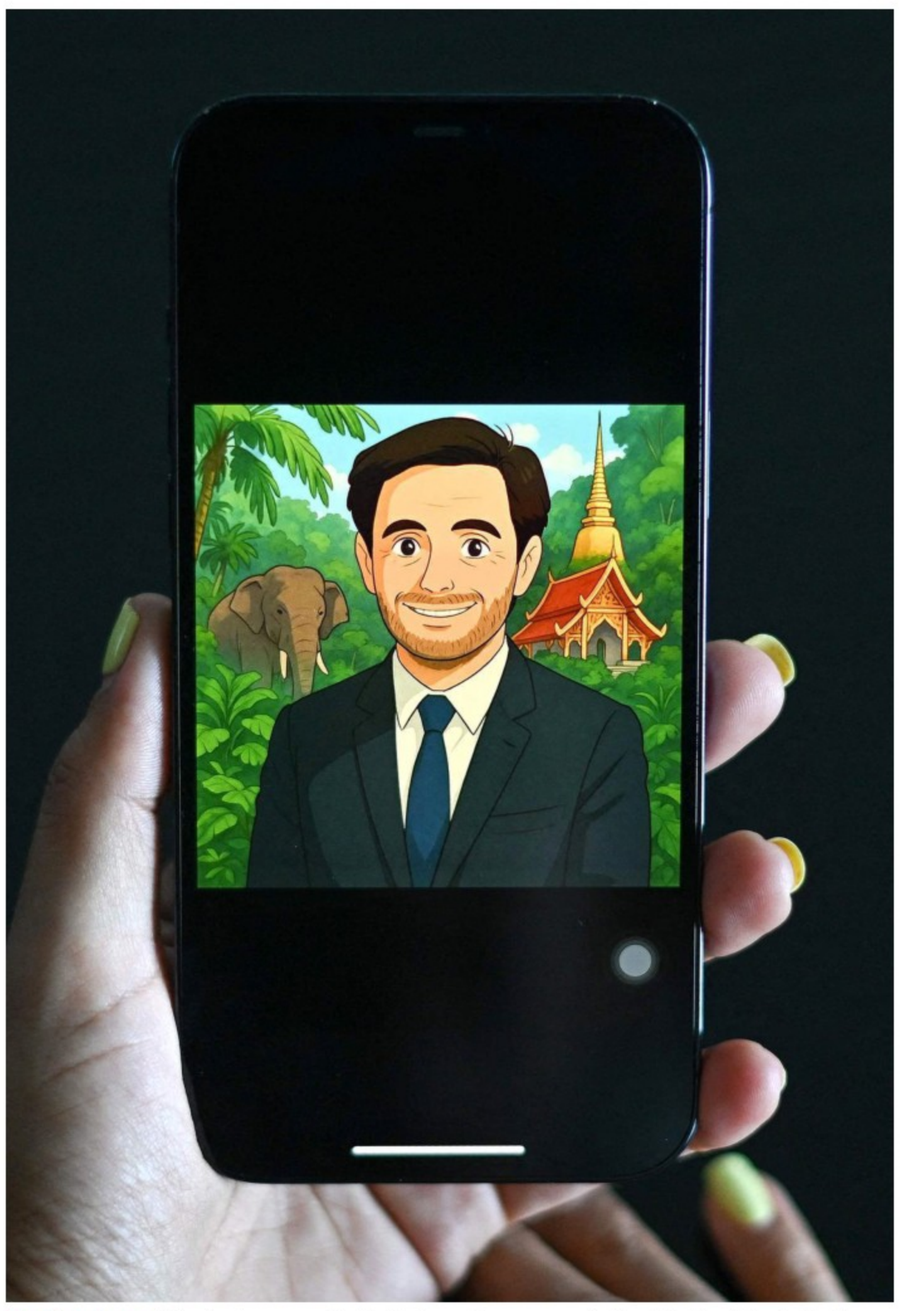
Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki's anime fantasy films have enthralled generations of children both within Japan and internationally. These movies instilled in countless viewers a lifelong opposition to war, militarisation, and all forms of violence, regardless of their political affiliation. Across Studio Ghibli films like *Princess Mononoke*, *Howl's Moving Castle*, and *Castle in the Sky*, soldiers are portrayed as misled fighters at best and sexual predators at worst.

This is why there was widespread shock when the official Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) account on X shared images reminiscent of Studio Ghibli's style. The IDF's collage was prompted by OpenAI's late March update to the GPT4o model. This update enabled users to simply type text prompts into ChatGPT to generate images imitating Studio Ghibli's iconic animation style.

While most people initially used ChatGPT's new image update to transform themselves or their family portraits into adorable, Studio Ghibli-inspired images, others ventured further. They created anime stills from photos of the 9/11 terror attacks and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Users shared Studio Ghibli-style pornography, "Ghibli-fied" stills from Bollywood films, and even a short video clip re-imagining Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* as a Studio Ghibli film. What's more, the irony of Nolan's *Oppenheimer* being turned into a Studio Ghibli-style image was lost on far too many.

One AI anime image that gained widespread attention in India depicted the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992 by Hindutva rioters. This image, rendered in a distorted Studio Ghibli style, featured anime figures waving flags atop the mosque's dome, cheering in celebration.

Another viral image was shared by the U.S. White House. This picture, in a childish anime style, mocked a foreign citizen accused of drug trafficking who was visibly distraught as she was taken into custody. The IDF account on X also joined the trend, sharing anime images of soldiers using communication devices and flying planes.



Creative decay: A Facebook user profile displaying an image generated by AI in the style of a Studio Ghibli animation in Bangkok on April 2. AFP

The art behind the trend

Professor David Leslie, Director of Ethics and Responsible Innovation Research at The Alan Turing Institute, highlighted the ethical concerns surrounding the misappropriation of a man's life work in "troubling ways."

"Miyazaki has always been a person who takes a lot of care to present the ideas that are passionate to him in his works, and here you've got just an operationalisation of the patterns or the styles of those work[s], now being easily re-appropriated in any context, right? So you've got the IDF of Israel producing Miyazaki-style images," said Mr. Leslie. He described the Japanese artist as "one of the great pacifists of his generation."

Mr. Leslie acknowledged that Studio Ghibli's media would likely be part of the OpenAI model's training data set. However, he stressed the need for a more evidence-based approach to explore the extent of its presence. He also highlighted OpenAI's lack of transparency as a potential complication in this process.

Miyazaki's ardent fans have resurfaced an old video where the Japanese director expressed disgust when introduced to AI-generated motion animation. In the video, Miyazaki referred to AI art as an "insult to life itself."

Last year, OpenAI championed the fair use defence, which allows copyrighted works to be used in specific circumstances. The company claimed this usage was "fair to creators, necessary for innovators, and crucial for U.S. competitiveness."

However, Leslie urged the public to consider a broader perspective beyond fair use regulations. He questioned whether OpenAI's actions were advancing the shareholder value of itself and Microsoft, or if they were aligned with the public interest.

Fair use?

Diving into the legal intricacies, Geoffrey McGovern, Director of Intellectual Property and Senior Political Scientist at the RAND non-profit organisation, clarified that while specific creative products or works enjoy copyright protection, this is not the case for concepts and ideas.

Mr. McGovern explained, "For instance, if Georges Braque, the French painter, sought to copyright *Still Life with Metronome* and the style that became known as Cubism, the painting's image would theoretically be copyrightable. It's an image that can be reproduced, and the rights to that reproduction would vest in Braque. However, the 'Cubist style' is an idea. U.S. law does not permit the ownership of ideas. It becomes IP-protected only once those ideas are manifested in some form, such as a photograph, poem, recipe, film, composition, and so on."

Mr. McGovern elaborated, "In this manner, the Studio Ghibli style is not copyrightable, and therefore, the ChatGPT-generated image does not constitute a copyright violation."

Tori Noble, Staff Attorney at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, noted that U.S. courts have yet to determine whether AI models that generate images in an artist's "style" are considered to be violating copyright.

For instance, in an ongoing case in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, *Andersen versus Stability AI Ltd.*, it was alleged that AI art generators produced images in the style of specific artists. The crux of the matter lies in determining whether the models' output infringed upon protectable creative expression and whether using works to develop AI image generators constitutes fair use. Ms. Noble sheds light on these undecided issues in the case.

Expressing love, sans AI

In our world, there are already works of art inspired by Studio Ghibli that were created without using AI.

One example is *The Glassworker*, a 2024 fantasy film directed by Usman Riaz. This film was celebrated as Pakistan's first hand-drawn animated feature film. The character designs clearly demonstrate Riaz's deep admiration for Studio Ghibli.

Unlike AI-generated images that are hastily assembled by machines in seconds, *The Glassworker* was meticulously crafted over years. Riaz's film received expert support from a Studio Ghibli producer, and it paid homage to Miyazaki's strong anti-war beliefs. This contrasts sharply with the "Ghibli-fied" images posted by the U.S. White House, the IDF, and individuals who celebrate the destruction of Islamic places of worship in India. This juxtaposition is particularly jarring for those who understand Miyazaki's anti-war films beyond their superficial appeal as photo filters.

Unlike many civil law countries, the United States does not safeguard the "moral rights" of creators to control how their work is used or adapted, clarified Ms. Noble. Consequently, Studio Ghibli films are not entitled to these very limited moral rights in the U.S, she added.

Even if applicable, U.S. moral rights would not permit Studio Ghibli to prevent others from imitating their artistic style to create new, transformative works, according to her.

Artists are now contemplating their next steps in response to concerns about their work being illegally stolen or scraped to train AI models. "This is one of the biggest technology law questions of our age," said Mr. McGovern, "and there is no easy answer that works for all artists." He suggested that creators be cautious about posting their work online, or that they explore using paywalls as a safeguard.

Meanwhile, Ms. Noble explained that websites take action to limit content scraping through the Robots Exclusion Protocol (REP). The REP enables websites to include a "robots.txt" file containing rules that restrict data scraping. While these rules are non-binding, OpenAI and other prominent American AI developers currently respect robots.txt restrictions, but not all may, Ms. Noble said.

Some artists are utilising anti-AI tools such as Glaze, which are virtually imperceptible to the naked eye but were designed to disrupt or at least mislead AI models attempting to scrape Glaze-protected art for training purposes.

Ms. Noble proposed that social and labour policies would be more effective avenues for countries to protect artists and creators from the economic harm caused by AI.

"At least in the U.S., extending copyright protection to uses of works for AI training purposes would not be an effective way to protect artists' livelihoods, and may actually undermine their interests over time," she said.

For his part, Mr. Leslie cautioned that the viability of living as an artist is not only being challenged by OpenAI but also by other companies that influence how people perceive (or disregard) the work of human artists and art teachers.

"If we kind of widen the lens and really think about the life of artists and the sustainable professional life of artists, the Ghibli moment is really an important but surface-level warning about a deeper transformation that's happening, where there is, I think, an existential risk to the future [that] visual artists have," he said.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

She was very listless during the journey

He needs to man up and face the consequences of his actions so that he can move on

S. Upendran

"How was the wedding? Did your aunts and uncles turn up for the big event?"

"Most of my aunts were present."

"How is your favourite aunt from Pune? Is she her usual bubbly self?"

"For some reason, she was rather listless this time around...."

"Listless? You mean to say that she usually comes with a list of things to do? I know a few people who always...."

"No, no. When you say that someone is listless, what you mean is that the individual is rather dull. Not their usual energetic self. This time around, my aunt didn't seem interested in the things happening around her."

"I see. In other words, she didn't display her usual enthusiasm. She was indifferent to things happening around her. Looked lazy."

"I guess you could say that. When you're listless, you usually avoid doing things which require effort. Here's an example. The humid weather was making Meera listless."

"That happens to me whenever I visit Mumbai or Chennai in the summer. Ever since he was overlooked for the promotion, Dharam has been listless."

"My favourite actor's movie is being released next week. I hope he's done a better job this time. His performance in the previous movie was listless."

"I think his listless performance was the main reason the movie flopped."

"You're probably right! But he doesn't believe it. According to him, it flopped due to other reasons. Perhaps, he should man up and accept what many people..."

"Man up? Never heard that expression before. What does it mean?"

"When someone tells you to 'man up' what they would like you to do is to act bravely. When facing a difficult situation, you should be brave and meet the challenge head on."

"In other words, deal with the problem in a manly fashion."

"I guess you could say that. The Minister needs to man up and apologise for the comments he made about the members of the Opposition."

"No chance of that happening. It's about time you manned up and told your two cousins to leave."

"I guess it's about time I manned up and confronted them."

"Can I use this expression with members of the opposite sex? Can I, for example, tell my sister to 'man up'?"

"Yes, the expression can be used with both men and women. Your sister, however, may be happier with 'woman up' instead of 'man up'."

"I see. Does it have the same meaning as 'man up'?"

"Yes! Except, in this case, it applies to a woman. It's important to remember that both 'man up' and 'woman up' are used in informal contexts."

upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Here's a simple quiz on innovations and discoveries that form the bedrock of modern day medicine. How many of them can you get?

Ramya Kannan

QUESTION 1

We couldn't have gotten very far if not for the first detailed anatomy of the human body, which used elaborate dissections to define anatomical contours. Who do we credit for this?

QUESTION 2

William Harvey's contributions in 1628 told the world about a very basic aspect of the functioning of the human body. This helped shaped several medical theories over the ages. What was his seminal work all about?

QUESTION 3

Much of the advances we have in microbiology, and even pathology, today wouldn't have been possible if the human race had not figured out how to use a microscope for the magnification that allows the study microbes and pathogens. The question is simple: who invented the microscope?

QUESTION 4

Horror stories abound from back in the day when surgeries were done on fully conscious patients, forcefully drunk on alcohol and/or biting down hard on a bit between their teeth, held done by an army of people. It was Crawford Long's invention that changed the field of surgery forever, what did he start?

QUESTION 5

This first recipient of the Nobel prize for Physics discovered something that was later optimised for use in diagnostics leading to a revolution in the field. Who is he and what did he discover?

Visual question:
Identify this Scottish scientist whose first achievement was the discovery of lysozyme, which later led him to his primary invention that drastically reduced deaths due to infections; and won him the Nobel prize for Medicine.

Questions and Answers to the April 10 edition of the daily quiz: 1. In 1927, Dr. B R Ambedkar led an agitation to allow Dalits to use water in a public tank in this place. **Ans: Mahad**
2. Savitribhai Phule's collection of poems. **Ans: *Kavya Phule***
3. This Dalit freedom fighter was India's Defence Minister during the Bangladesh War of Liberation. **Ans: Jagjivan Ram**
4. This Dalit activist from the then Madras Presidency, represented Dalits in the two Round Table Conferences held with the British alongside Dr. Ambedkar. **Ans: Rettamalai Srinivasan**
5. This social reformer launched the Sadhujana Paripalana Sangham. **Ans: Ayyankali**
Visual: Identify this Dalit activist and politician. **Ans: Jignesh Mewani**
Early Birds: Tamal Biswas| Haridas Pal| Anju Sharma| Jitesh Mori| Seema Abhijeet

Word of the day

Stylus:
a sharp pointed device attached to the cartridge of a record player; a pointed tool for writing or drawing or engraving

Usage: *For writing, they used a stylus and a stone tablet.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/styluspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈstaɪ.ləs/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Build your skills

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

I have a Bachelor's degree in English and want to pursue a Master's from a Central University. What if I do not score enough on the CUET-PG exam? Also, what kind of jobs will I get? Karthik

Dear Karthik,

CUET-PG is now the primary entrance exam for most Central Universities for PG programmes and so prepare well. If you do not get your desired score, then you can apply to Master's programmes in state Universities. They have their own entrance exams and admission criteria. Some well-respected ones include Presidency University, Kolkata; Jadavpur University, Kolkata; University of Mumbai; University of Madras; and University of Hyderabad. You can also consider private universities such as Ashoka University, FLAME, Christ University, Jain University, and OP Jindal Global University. Open universities like IGNOU could also be a good option if you prefer distance learning or need more flexibility.

A Master's in English opens up a variety of career paths with each requiring different skill sets and offering diverse work environments. To teach in a school, you will need to do a B.Ed. To teach in a college or do research you have to clear the UGC-NET/JRF. Other options are content writing or editing for websites, blogs, social media sites, being a technical writer or a content creator for digital media, working with publishing companies as a proof reader, public relations, corporate communications and so on.

Which of these appeals to you? Do you enjoy teaching, writing, working with people, or research? Identify and build the skills needed for your desired career path.

I finished my B.A. in 2021 and have been preparing for the UPSC CSE, as I aspire to join the police. I don't have any other degree or job. Should I study further or stay focused on the UPSC?

Evaluate your situation objectively and be realistic about your chance of success in future attempts. Identify your weaknesses and areas for improvement if you still want to try again but set a realistic time frame. A gap of four years is a key concern with no other degree or job to showcase. This will limit your career options if you choose to move away now.

What about State Police Service exams or the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)? Check the exam details online.

What about an MBA or Master's in Public Administration, Political Science, International Relations or a relevant subject that can enhance your resume? If you still feel confused, meet a career counsellor who will help you find out what your interests are.

I am in B.A. first year and want to be an Air Force officer (Flying branch). In class 12, I had PCB as subjects. How can I achieve my dream? Pranav

Dear Pranav,

You will have to take the Combined Defence Services Examination (CDSE) conducted by the UPSC. If selected, you can join the Air Force Academy directly for training. If you are a member of the NCC Air Wing and have a C certificate, you can apply under the NCC Special Entry Scheme. Requirements for Flying Branch are graduate degree (any discipline) with Physics and Mathematics at the 10+2 level or a B.E. or B.Tech. You will have to clear stringent physical fitness and medical standards and pass the Pilot Aptitude Battery Test (PABT).

Complete your B.A, with good grades and cover the Class 11 and 12 Maths gap. This is non-negotiable for the Flying branch. Consider a short diploma or certificate course that covers basic Physics and Mathematics concepts.

If your college has an NCC Air Wing, joining it will provide you with valuable exposure to aviation and increase your chances through the NCC Special Entry scheme.

Start preparing for the CDSE written exam. You will find practice materials online and in reputed coaching centres. Keep yourself updated on the latest notifications and exam patterns.

My daughter is in Class 7. She is talented but doesn't enrol in any school-level competitions. I do not know if this is due to a lack of self-confidence or shyness. Is this the right age to take her for career guidance? Varun

Dear Varun,

Career guidance can be considered when she is in Class 9 or 10 (14-15 years). But talk to her about her behaviour. While it is common for talented children to avoid competitions, we need to understand what she is going through. Is it perfectionism, fear of failure or rejection, lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem or social awkwardness or just indifference to competition?

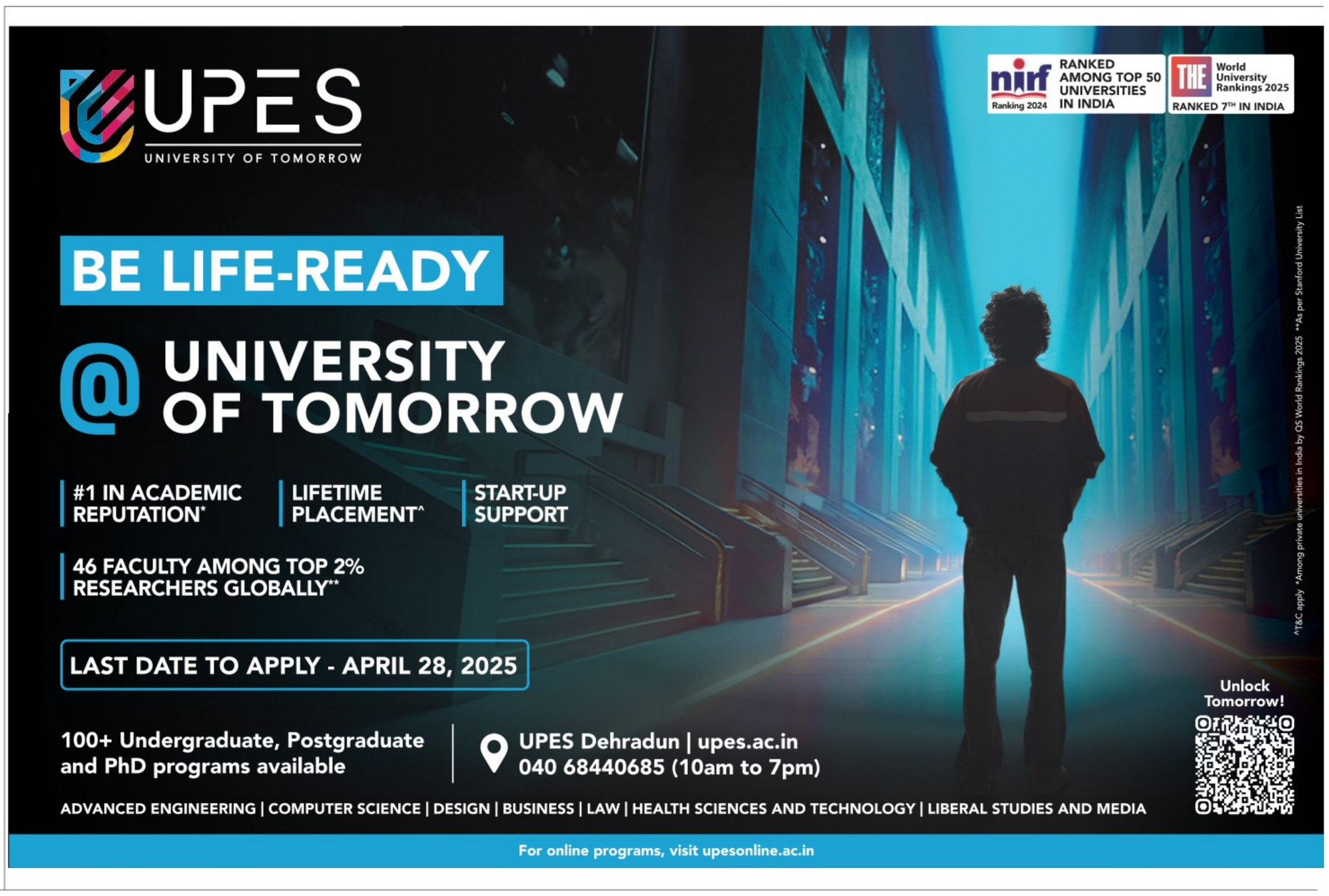
At 12-13, children go through significant physical, emotional, and social changes. It is a time of self-discovery and developing their identity. Talk to her about her interests and pay attention to what makes her feel engaged and energised. Focus on praising her effort rather than the results.

What is going on at school? What about her friendships?

If she finds it difficult to open up to you, suggest meeting a competent therapist and foster an environment where she feels safe to express herself and make mistakes. Support her in exploring different activities and hobbies, even if they are outside her comfort zone. Encourage her to participate in smaller events within her comfort zone and celebrate her participation and effort, regardless of the outcome. Be her cheerleader.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge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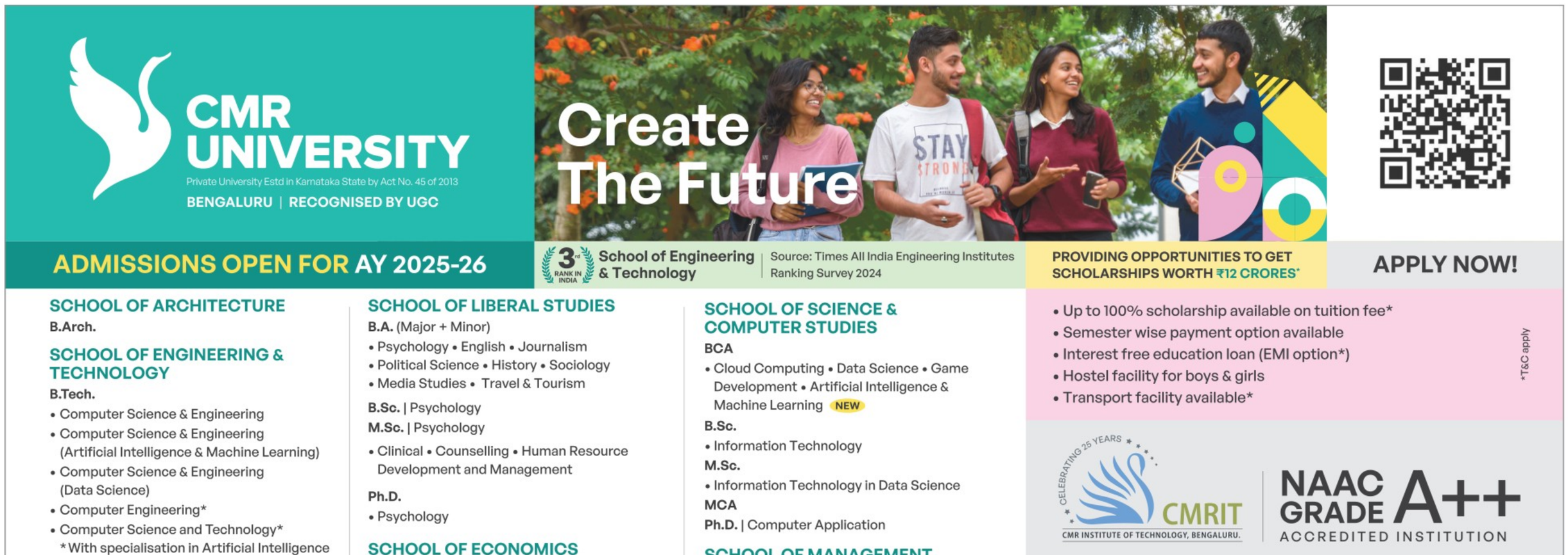
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Differences emerging in govt. over caste census report

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar says it is his duty to get justice for all communities

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Differences over the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey report ahead of the Cabinet meeting on April 17 seem to be cropping up in the Congress and its government with senior Lingayat leader and Heavy Industries Minister M.B. Patil claiming that the Lingayat population in the State was more than one crore as against 66.35 lakh indicated in the survey report.

"It is not a simple issue. It is not the mistake of H. Kanathraj (Commission). We are also responsible for the reduced population. People have registered without reference to Lingayats for the purpose of reservation in 2A category. However, our population is more than one crore," the

M.B. Patil FILE PHOTO

D.K. Shivakumar FILE PHOTO

Minister told presspersons at Vijayapura on Sunday.

His comments came in the light of the data in the survey - conducted by Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes - revealing the Veerashaiva-Lingayat population figure to be about 66.35 lakh or about 11% of the enumerated population, which is far less than the figure of about 17% to 22% that the community claims. The Veerashaiva-Lingayats and Vokkaligas are contesting the population data, and both have said the survey was unscientific.

Mr. Patil, a Lingayat leader, said that Banajiga, Ganiga and Kumbara communities among others who are in 2A have gone with a prefix of 'Hindu', and that they have not prefixed their castes with Lingayat. "If you take this population, it will add to more than 25 lakh to Lingayat population. Discussion will be on how to add them to the community. There are other castes with same names also in the Category."

Stating that alternatives have to be discussed, he said, "We will have to see if the communities agree to brought from 2A to 3B, . Should they be added continuing to keep the communities in 2A. We will discuss all this in the Cabinet."

Mr. Patil's Cabinet colleague and Home Minister G. Parameshwara told presspersons in Tumakuru that since Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that 95% of the population has been covered, it is more likely that the Cabinet will agree to the survey.

"There has been no discussion yet. I am reading the copy too. The population data is already in public and it is more or less true."

However, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, the Vokkaliga leader, said that it is the right of leaders to protect their respective communities. "Why should we interfere or criticise if they (community leaders) are giving statements. They have the right under the Constitution. The Chief Minister has said there would be a discussion in the legislature. How much open can one be?" He told presspersons in Bengaluru, "As KPCC President, it is my duty to deliver justice to all. My voice, my body, my aim and my commitment is there (for the issue)."

Meeting of communities

The Veerashaiva-Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities are expected to meet and formulate a reaction to the report ahead of the Cabinet meet on April 17 even as they continue to differ with the Commission's findings, especially the population data.

Amidst tussle over numbers, a small percentage of people didn't provide caste details

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

Amidst the clamour over the caste-wise population identified in the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey (caste census) conducted by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, a small percentage of the population either refused to provide caste details during the census or did not know their caste to provide the details.

A total of 73,399 families, including 53,241 families living in urban areas that accounted for about 2.53 lakh (including 1.12 lakh women), or about 0.425% of the State population that came under the survey refused to identify their caste during the enumeration, shows data available in the survey report accepted by the Cabinet on Friday.

The full-fledged survey report is yet to be released by the government, and it will be discussed at a special Cabinet meeting on April 17.

'Caste-free'

Interestingly, as many as 35,845 families, including those 27,535 families living in urban areas, have stated that they do not belong to any caste or are 'caste-free'. Their population is pegged at 1.34 lakh or about 0.225% of the State's enumerated population. This data has emerged at a time when caste groups are lobbying to state that their numbers have reduced or the names of the castes have gone wrong.

As many as 5.98 crore people of about a projected population of 6.35 crore in Karnataka from about 1.35 crore households were covered under the survey conducted in 2015.

The survey is being seen as an important document containing data set that would realign the political calculations as well as allowing the government to recalibrate its focus on the populations that have continued to not receive the reservation benefits in educational and employment spheres.

About 52,272 families, including 44,912 families in urban areas, have marked themselves under the "if at all does not know the caste" category, Their population is pegged at 1.94 lakh or about 0.324% of the total population.

Castes and communities could not be identified for 3,755 persons belonging to 967 households in the State. They constitute about 0.006% of the enumerated population.

'Not part of final number calculated'

Commission sources said that those who did not reveal or did not have castes are not part of the final number calculated for enumeration. "Some people did not know castes because of migration or due to nomadic nature. Some castes were not in the detailed list that we had drafted. Moreover, we cannot compel anyone to provide details," sources said.

Fact sheet

Total projected population in 2015	6.35 crore
Total population covered	5.98 crore
People who refused to identify their castes	2.53 lakh
People who said they are 'caste-free'	1.34 lakh
People not knowing their caste	1.94 lakh
Castes and communities that could not be identified	3,755

The full-fledged survey report is yet to be released by the government, and it will be discussed at a special Cabinet meeting on April 17

BJP demands fresh caste census; plans to hold meeting today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Terming the caste census report 'politically motivated', the Opposition BJP has urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to get a fresh survey done in a scientific and authentic manner. The party has also decided to hold a meeting of its leaders on Monday to discuss the implications of the report.

Announcing this at a press conference in Bengaluru, Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok alleged that the report had been dictated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to suit his vote bank politics.

"The caste census report is not only unscientific, but also tries to divide various castes such as Lingayats, Vokkaligas and Dalits only to project Muslims as the dominant community with political intentions," Mr. Ashok alleged.

"Previously, Lingayats were considered the largest caste in the State, followed by Vokkaligas and Dalits. However, the new report claims Muslims are the largest community. Despite having various sub-castes within Muslims, they have not been separated, while certain sub-castes among Vokkaligas and Lingayats have been categorised just to divide the community," he alleged.

Numbers inflated

He accused the report of inflating the numbers of communities that are considered a vote bank for the ruling Congress and unfairly targeting Vokkaligas, Lingayats, and Dalits.

He warned that if the State Cabinet approves this report, then there would be internal rebellion in the Congress as the affected communities would reject Ministers from their community.

Maintaining that the report was not authentic as they had not visited lakhs of households, he wondered why the report did not use software tools and data to authenticate the identity of enumerated households.

Pointing that the government had spent ₹150 crore on preparing the report, he wondered where all the money had gone if all the households were not visited by enumerators.

Making it clear that the BJP was not opposed to conducting a caste census, he demanded that the government should withdraw this report and get a fresh report done on a scientific basis even it takes another six months to complete.

He compared the current Congress with the old Congress that fought against the British, stating that today's Congress is stoking divisions between Vokkaligas and Lingayats.

You are the pillar of the Congress, says Shivakumar about Seva Dal

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Encouraging positive self-perception and promoting a sense of self-worth among Seva Dal members, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday said Seva Dal was the pillar of the Congress.

"Do not feel that Seva Dal has the least importance in the party. We are thinking of giving power to the Seva Dal at taluk and district levels," the Deputy Chief Minister, who is also KPCC president, said at a State-level conference of Bharatiya Seva Dal here.

"Society recognises those who do service. That is why in our society, there are more temples of Lord Hanuman, the devotee of Lord Ram, than of Lord Ram's father Dasharatha Maharaj. Similarly, you are the pillar of the Congress. All Seva Dal workers should keep this in mind," he said.

National security

Pointing out that the Seva Dal was established for national security, Mr. Shivakumar said it started during Jawarhalal Nehru's tenure and had been going on till Mallikarjun Kharge's tenure. Do not assume that the Seva Dal is a side branch of the Congress and that the party does not recognise it. Seva Dal will be given as much power as possible at the district and taluk levels, he said.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

CM's volley of questions to scribes

"Why do journalists not ask serious questions about the state of the country's economy or the reasons behind price rise to Union Ministers or BJP leaders? Why do they train their guns only on the Opposition leaders, especially the Congress Ministers and leaders?" This was Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's question to journalists during his interaction in Belagavi airport. He followed it up with more questions.

"Why do you keep asking me questions about price rise? Why do you not ask questions to BJP leaders on why fuel prices are high even when crude oil prices are low? Why is the Union government taking an unprecedented high levels of loans? Why do you believe the BJP leaders who say that the Karnataka government has become bankrupt? That is because you do not know, do not have data that is necessary to understand serious issues. I cannot blame you," he said.

K.L. Rahul celebrates in *Kantara* style

Wicket-keeper-batter K.L. Rahul's *(in picture)* innings against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) was largely responsible for the victory of Delhi Capitals in Bengaluru on Thursday. But the manner in which Rahul celebrated the victory has gone viral on social media.

Rahul said, "This place is very special to me. My celebrations were inspired by one of my favorite films *Kantara*. It was a small gesture to express that this field, this land, this place where I grew up - is mine."

Rahul scored 93 and was declared man of the match. This was a match that Chief Minister Siddarmaiah watched flanked by his two trusted Ministers Byrathi Suresh and K.N. Rajanna.

Mudipu prison work at a slow pace

The construction work of a state-of-the-art Central Prison at Mudipu in Bantwal taluk near Mangaluru is moving at a snail's pace. The work of the jail began during the first term of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Now, for the last 20 months, all works at the site have come to a standstill. The non-release of funds is said to be the reason for non-completion of the building works. Though the construction cost was estimated at ₹200 crore in 2017, it is likely to escalate many times now owing to a hike in prices of steel, cement and other interior-related items.

Once the work is complete, the prison could house close to 10,000 inmates.

The government decided to construct the central jail on a sprawling 67.89 acre campus to shift the inmates from the jail that is currently located in the heart of the Mangaluru.

There also were complaints by residents that the installation of mobile network jammers in the prison affected students and residents in the vicinity.

Capt. Chowta is all praise for Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who focused on coastal development as Chief Minister in Gujarat, has good knowledge about Karnataka coastline, claimed Dakshina Kannada MP Captain Brijesh Chowta at a programme in Mangaluru.

At the workshop, the MP said he would call the Prime Minister for the golden jubilee celebration programme of the New Mangaluru Port. "When we call him, we should collectively work and propose a programme for development of Mangalore Port, which he can announce during the function," he said.

Later, during his interaction with some stakeholders of Mangaluru development, the MP had more praise for Mr. Modi on other counts.

He shared his experience of the 20-minute interaction he had with the Prime Minister on the day Waqf Amendment Bill was presented in Lok Sabha. Keeping the pressure related to Bill presentation and discussion aside, Mr. Modi had a free interaction with him and his parents, the MP said.

Rishikesh Bahadur Desai
Nagesh Prabhu
Raghava M.

Waqf (Amendment) Bill: BJP MP says no State can refuse to implement a Central law

National spokesperson of the BJP Sudhanshu Trivedi, BJP leaders R. Ashok, Tejeswi Surya, and Ravi Subramanya at a programme organised by BJP Bengaluru South district, in Bengaluru on Sunday.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Defending the recently passed Waqf (Amendment) Bill by Parliament, BJP national spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Sudhanshu Trivedi on Sunday said no State could refuse to implement a Central law in the constitutional system of India.

"The Bill has been enacted following all procedures and fulfilling all constitutional beliefs and is aimed at empowering poor Muslims while challenging decades of appeasement politics. No State can refuse to implement a Central law and if this happens it is a threat to the Constitution," he said at a programme organised by BJP Bengaluru South district.

Taking a dig at the Opposition, Mr. Trivedi asserted that the Indian Constitution would prevail over any religious decrees.

> The Bill has been enacted following all procedures and fulfilling all constitutional beliefs and is aimed at empowering poor Muslims while challenging decades of appeasement politics.
>
> **SUDHANSHU TRIVEDI**
> BJP national spokesperson

"This Bill introduces significant changes to the Waqf Act, 1995. The amendments aim to enhance the management and regulation of waqf properties, ensuring greater accountability and inclusivity. It is a step towards empowering the Muslim community and promoting inclusivity," he added.

The BJP MP used sharp rhetoric to ridicule the Opposition's allegations about potential misuse of waqf properties. He cited a sarcastic proverb in Hindi implying that existing practices were more exploitative than the proposed reforms.

He tied the Bill into a larger narrative of national integration and unity, suggesting that streamlining and regulating religious institutions was part of building a modern, progressive India where all citizens were equal under the law.

He further questioned why waqf exists in India when Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria didn't have it.

"Various High Courts have ruled that waqf is not a religious matter. Waqf board is an abstract body for management of the land."

Bengaluru South MP and member of JPC on Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Tejasvi Surya, and Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, R. Ashok, also spoke.

Survey: Priyank takes a dig at Central govt.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Taking a dig at the BJP-led government at the Centre, RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge stated that the February 2025 Mood of the Nation Survey, conducted by *India Today* and C-Voter, reveals significant public concern over India's economic landscape. "A substantial 76% of respondents perceive unemployment as a pressing issue"

"This concern is even more pronounced among lower-income individuals, with 70% reporting increased financial strain," he said on social media.

Ridiculing the Centre, he remarked, "But no worries. Razing of Aurangzeb's tomb and hyper nationalism will see us through this misery as well."

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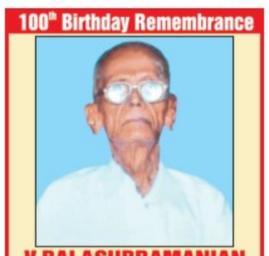

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DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

(Above and right) Members of the Coalition For Sex Workers and Sexuality Minority Rights, LGBTQ+ community and their supporters taking part in the annual 'Karnataka Queer Habba' in Bengaluru in November last year. K. MURALI KUMAR

Trans people: Shunned by society and ignored by government

There is resentment in the community over being ignored in both the State and BBMP Budgets, with very little or no allocation being made for their welfare

Yemen S.
BENGALURU

Back in 2021, during the peak of the second wave of COVID-19 in Bengaluru, two transgender women, Anandi and Aisha Kousar, had to sell their gold earrings to make a living. The two transwomen eventually bought a pushcart, stove, gas and basic cooking equipment to sell tea and snacks to workers at Hudson Circle, with the determination to take care of their three adopted children.

While Anandi and Aisha were able to start a small business with the small amount of gold they had, many others from the transgender community continue to face significant challenges in accessing basic education, employment opportunities, and support for entrepreneurship, as sustained attention and meaningful welfare measures for sexual minorities from the State government and local bodies remain limited.

Five demands

The Siddaramaiah-led Karnataka government in March presented its Budget for 2025-26, which had no mention of allocation of funds for the sexual minorities in the State. Right after the Budget, at a press conference, members of the Movement for Gender and Sexual Pluralism (MGSP) voiced strong concerns over the continued marginalisation of gender and sexual minorities.

Activists criticised the Chief Minister for "repeatedly overlooking" the needs of their community, despite several appeals for financial allocation and inclusive policy reforms.

Manohar Elavarthi, a representative of the movement, noted that they had submitted five key demands ahead of the Budget, aimed at enhancing opportunities and welfare for gender and sexual minorities. Their demands included the introduction of a dedicated welfare scheme for transgender individuals, increasing financial support for entrepreneurs from gender and sexual minority communities to ₹2 lakh from the existing ₹50,000, free sex reassignment surgeries, job training aligned with the 1% horizontal reservation which is provided in government jobs, and the creation of a separate government body to monitor and advance their welfare.

Expressing disappointment at the lack of response, Elavarathi questioned why a budget exceeding ₹4 lakh crore could not allocate something for upliftment of marginalised communities. As per the 2011 census, Karnataka had a transgender population of 20,266, which now, according to people from the community, may have doubled.

In civic budget

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Budget for 2025-26 does not hold great promise either. The civic body has allocated ₹10 crore for the welfare of economically backward classes, that includes the transgender community.

The budget says the BBMP will provide financial assistance to entrepreneurs by bearing 50% of the project cost or a maximum of ₹ 2 lakh for only 500 eligible candidates from all backward classes. There are 9,182 transgender individuals residing in Bengaluru as of December 2022, according to official records from the Bengaluru Urban District Commissioner.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Rekha (name changed), a 38-year-old transwoman, who begs near K.R. Market said, "I have been begging at signals for years, not because I want to, but because I was never given a chance to study or work. A little support from the government, a scheme, and a job training programme, could change so much. But there is nothing for us."

Unlike Rekha, Meena (name changed), a 30-year-old, managed to get trained as a beautician but still faces several hurdles. "I managed to complete a beautician's course with the help of an NGO, but I still struggle to pay rent and buy products. For now, I work at a friend's beauty parlour or do house services. It is hard for transwoman beauticians to find customers, as customers are scared to just be around us. With no support from the government, setting up my parlour will remain a dream. We were hoping the government would at least support transgender entrepreneurs this time, maybe offer loans or subsidies. But once again, our hopes have been ignored. We do not want charity, we want opportunity."

Transgender rights activist Akkai Padmashali. K. MURALI KUMAR

Succour in guarantees

Transgender activist Akkai Padmashali says the community welcomes the move of the State government to extend five guarantees to the transgender community. However, they want more in terms of educational and work opportunities.

"The Budget in general is lacking focus on the vulnerable sections including Devadasis, sex workers and others. If a person wants to start a business or start-up, the minimum requirement is ₹5 lakh, but the government is not giving enough.

The State must also have a separate Budget for the community based on the population of each city, the trans community's population in Bengaluru is different to that of the community of Hubballi or Dharwad."

Akkai added that the community would soon meet politicians, including Women and Child Development Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar, Bengaluru Development Minister D.K. Shivakumar, and the Chief Minister, to demand a separate Budget allocation for the transgender community. Rakshitha Mallikarjuna, a transgender activist from Ondede that focuses on the welfare of young trans persons, said, "It is disappointing that the State government has been ignoring our community in the last few Budgets.

In the 2023-24 Budget, the pension amount for individuals from the community increased from ₹800 to ₹1,200, but not everyone from the community is receiving it. When we were included in the Gruha Lakshmi scheme our community was happy, but just like the pension, not every transwoman across the State receives funds through this scheme. The BBMP's minimal inclusion of our community in their budget too is disappointing."

Need for support

Vinod Kartavya, a social worker who has been closely working with the trans community for many years, argued that the trans community has no one to call their "family" which is why they need additional support. "Their parents or siblings abandon them, which is not only emotionally traumatic but also plays a huge role in transgender people not having a permanent address and possessing basic documents or services like an Aadhaar card, PAN card, driving licence, ration card, bank accounts and more. If the government does not help the community set up their businesses, build their homes and lead a normal life like all of us do, it will continue to be hard to them to make even subsistence living."

According to the Karnataka State Policy on Transgenders - 2017, the State must have a welfare board for the community to protect the rights and interests of transgender persons, ensuring access to welfare schemes and addressing any grievances. The board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the policy, including issuing identity cards, conducting awareness programs, and initiating welfare initiatives. But the formation of the board is long pending.

"There is no progress on the welfare board at all. We are also demanding to have at least one person from the community as a representative in the Legislative Assembly or Council because being a political representative or being within the political circles is the only way to go forward," said Akkai.

Vinod added that the government has been facing difficulty even in the identification of transgender persons.

"The problem with the trans community is that they are nomads, moving around from area to area, making it difficult for the government to identify them. There are also men simply dressed in sarees and wigs who are not really transwomen, as begging is a source of income. When asked to be identified, these men run away. So the community remains very scattered and does not have an identity. To form a welfare board, the government needs a solid representative from the community."

Digital platform launched for autism management

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To transform the special needs support ecosystem by offering a comprehensive, data-driven, and collaborative approach to autism management, a Bengaluru-based start-up launched a mobile application in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The mobile application Krivi.ai has emerged from personal experience and an understanding of the current gaps in the special needs ecosystem by founders of Ability Advocacy, the start-up.

After their son was diagnosed with autism, the founders – Shivendra Upadhyay and his wife Bibha Kumari – came up with the idea of developing a mobile application that can empower the enablers to focus on the child and not just the operational stuff.

The application is a centralised hub that connects parents, therapy centres, therapists, educators, and researchers, streamlining communication and simplifying operational complexities. The platform provides a collaboration platform that fosters shared objective alignment and goal tracking alongside multi-directional dependency mapping, clearly illustrating the dependency impact on shared milestones.

"Different studies in India suggest that one in 68 children (0-17 years) have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The prevalence is concerning and we need innovative solutions to fight this," said Mr. Upadhyay at the launch.

"By centralising data and insights around autistic children, we are empowering parents, special educators, and stakeholders to collaborate more effectively by bringing synergy – so every child gets the support they deserve," he said.

"By bringing all stakeholders within one circle and facilitating real-time communication, the platform leverages Krivi buddy, a conversational AI for instant support, while also streamlining appointment and session management to efficiently schedule and track therapy sessions in one place," he added.

I know what you are going to do next summer

UK is developing a 'murder prediction' programme to identify people most likely to become killers

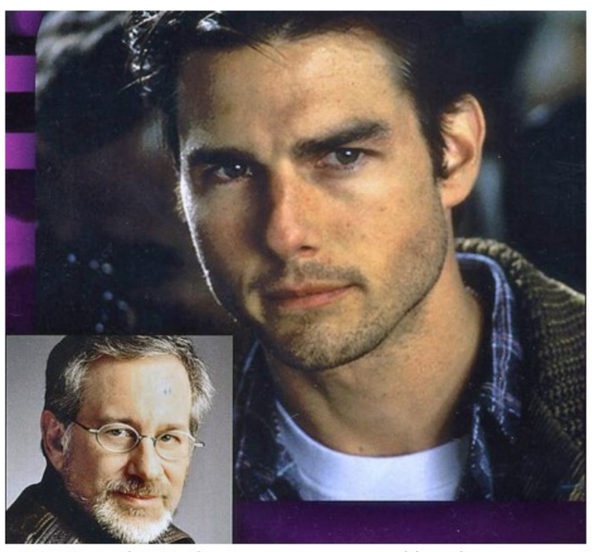
ABOUT 500 WORDS

Suresh Menon

The year is 2054. In Washington, there's a police department, 'Precrime' which catches criminals before they have committed a crime, thanks to help from three 'precogs'. This is the premise of the movie Minority Report, based on Philip K Dick's novella. Tom Cruise is in it, Steven Spielberg directed it.

Ha! ha! we said. Such things can only happen in movies. It was fun, but "not in our lifetime", we concluded. Looking back now, perhaps this is how some of the gadgets in the James Bond movies of the past – cell phones and fancy cars – must have appeared to viewers initially.

Minority Report was made in 2002, Dick's story published in 1956 when Cold War anxieties reigned. If two of the precogs following the dots agreed on a person's future, that was the majority report. Then the dissenting opinion of the third became a minority report, but that could be equally valid. Soon the head of 'precrime' is seen to commit a murder in the future; the classic duel between authoritarianism and individual liberty unfolds.



Tom Cruise, who acted in 'Minority Report', and (inset) Steven Spielberg who directed it.

And now here we are. The UK is developing a "murder prediction" programme to identify the people most likely to become killers. According to *The Guardian*, researchers are using algorithms to analyse the information of thousands of people, including victims of crime, as they try to identify those likely to commit serious offences. The scheme is called "sharing data to improve risk assessment", which lacks the snappy wit of the movie title, but that's not its biggest drawback.

There is something chilling and dystopian about Big Brother not only watching you but reading your thoughts. Sometimes even before you have them.

Data from people not convicted of any offence will be used as part of the project, in case you thought this was just about criminals. Forget to wish your boss 'good morning' and you could be on the list if he complains to the police.

Suddenly you are on file, your personal data and health markers available at the stroke of a key. And you may be at the mercy of officials who are fanatics or mentally ill themselves. Imagine then if you don't say the right things or worship at the right place or earn a living making fun of the rich and powerful. Remember when, a couple of years ago, a stand-up comedian was arrested for a joke he didn't tell? He was accused of "intent" to offend. Authorities can sometimes 'see' the future without precogs or databases.

Minority Report set off a philosophical discussion for a while. The idea that all events are determined by past events is a blow against free will which then leads to the question, how much moral responsibility does a person own for his actions? The UK's "murder prediction programme" acts like a psychoanalyst in reverse, joining non-existent dots extended to the future rather than existing dots that go into past. It is the dream of dictators around the world.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 14, 1975

Number of Soil Tests on the Increase

Bangalore, April 13: There is greater appreciation of the importance of soil testing among the farmers of Karnataka in the last two or three years.

In the past, there was some amount of reluctance and also indifference among farmers mainly borne out of lack of knowledge about the significance of soil testing as an aid to increasing agricultural production. However, the efforts of the officials of the Agricultural Department to educate farmers succeeded and at present all the 18 laboratories of the Government located in different districts and one laboratory in the Cooperative sector in Sirsi are working with full steam to test soil samples whose number is progressively increasing.

There are also four mobile testing laboratories, one run by the Centre and the other run by the State Government.

Small Industry: Govt. Asked to Restate Policy

Bangalore, April 13: In a qualified support to the Karnataka Government's White Paper on Industrial Policy and Programme issued recently, the Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association has asked the Government to restate its policy in regard to the promotion and development of the small-scale sector.

In the view of the Association, the white paper tended to ignore the contribution of the small-scale sector, by and large, to the national economy. The Association said "to relegate the sector to a downstream and territory growth status will be a denial of facts and a reversal of policy.

CITYBEATS

Summer stage

APRIL 14
Ranga Shankara presents Summer Express Workshops 2025, a part of AHA! Theatre for Children Programme. Day-long workshops led by senior theatre facilitators will introduce children to the various aspects of the stage. The workshop will be held in two batches – April 14 to 27 and between April 28 and May 11.
Mail programming@rangashankara.in for details.

A harvest of flavours

ONGOING
Sawari has introduced a special Baisakhi festival menu for the festive season, which will be available till April 15. Signature dishes such as Punjabi *kadhi pakora, maa choley ki dal, kale gehoon ki roti* and *bharwan tandoori kulcha* are on the menu. Desserts include *badam ka halwa* and *atte ki panjiri*.
At Sawari, Hennur-Bagalur Main Road.

Get a gelato

ONGOING
Baskin Robbins India has launched a range of summer specials with gelatos among their offerings. The product comes in three options – gelato flavours, gelato sundaes and special gelato sundaes for children in flavours such as chocolate and roasted hazelnut, and blueberry cheesecake.
Available across all Baskin Robbins parlours, priced ₹115 upwards.

Come fall in love with Nature

Bengaluru-based naturalist and wildlife photographer Sanket Reddy on the creation of his book *The Viewfinder*

Bright, bold and beautiful Snapshots from *The Viewfinder* by Sanket Reddy (below). SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ruth Dhanaraj

What is it about *Artisocats, Jungle Book, Stuart Little, The Bee Movie* and countless others, that makes them timelessly appealing? Apart from being "cute and cuddly" to quote Skipper of *Madagascar* fame, it is the human-ness of their characters that makes them unforgettable.

Well, it is not just artistic licence – real animals out in the wild, exhibit human characteristics too, says Bengaluru-based naturalist and wildlife photographer Sanket Reddy. Sanket recently launched his first book titled, *The Viewfinder*, a gorgeous, coffee table tome that showcases all the species that have strayed into the scope of his lens.

According to Sanket, most coffee table books in India on the subject of wildlife, revolve around tigers, elephants and bigger species. "There are so many animals that don't get enough attention and I was trying to put together a book that would encapsulate what I've learnt from my travels around the world," says Sanket, adding that most books tend to get too technical either about the species, geographic location or the science of photography.

Now, with *The Viewfinder*, Sanket certainly managed to land the Goldilocks zone. Sectioned into chapters such as 'A Drop of Joy', 'The Might of Love,' The Breath of Freedom' and more, they delve into the characteristics and personalities each animal or bird has exhibited in the wild.

Life lessons
Sanket says the purpose of *The Viewfinder* was to forge a connect between people and Nature. Since he had photographed all manner of wildlife, his biggest challenge was finding a thread to bring them all together in a book. "I felt one way to get people to connect with Nature, would be by sharing my learnings in the wild. And that is how it materialised – we arranged the images in nine categories."

"What better way than putting people in scenarios where they have often been stuck?" he asks. "Whenever I go into the wild and spend time observing animals, I try to understand why they do certain things, and connect it to human behaviour as well."

"That was the reason I tried a different approach to this book so even children would be able to connect with it and see it from a simple perspective.'

For instance, Sanket briefly describes an encounter where three King Penguins engage in a standoff, with neither willing to back down. Eventually,

they resolve their differences with playful slaps and good natured jostling. "Incidents like this make you think of the connection between mankind and the animal kingdom; it also tells you that differences can sometimes be resolved in a playful manner."

"Being in the wild has always helped me come back with a different perspective to any problem or issue that I may have been facing." He shares how the row beetle is a tiny termite-sized insect commonly found in South India. "I learnt these species are introduced in different parts of the world to control pests. However, once their job is done, they don't stay back and start feeding off the plant; without being told, they move away from there."

"It made me realise that one is appreciated as long as you are able to add value. And that it is always better to leave before you are asked to, and not overstay your welcome."

Bees and trees
Sanket says his attraction to Nature, began as a child, fuelled to a large extent by family holidays that would "eventually end in a forest." However, his path to the present was charted somewhere in the beginning of 2007, when, "I felt a need to document some of the marvellous phenomena I witnessed in the wild."

"Besides, many a time when I got back, experts would debunk my accounts, and the only way I could prove it was if I had photographic proof. That is when I picked up a camera, but by no means did I think I would still be invested in it, so many years later."

Has he ever seen a species step back from the brink of extinction?

"The lion-tailed macaque had almost disappeared, but thanks to the efforts of organisations such as the Nature Conservation Foundation and individuals in the Annamalai region, who educated people there that these creatures too, were a part of the ecosystem and deserved their space. Thankfully, their numbers have not dwindled further."

Sanket says small birds, such as the great Indian bustard, linger around the border of extinction, but due to constant efforts, they are still around. Sadly, he has seen species vanish too. "Today's photographers find it hard to believe when I say hyenas once used to roam the forests of Mudumalai in South India."

In the crosshairs
Each image in *The Viewfinder* is accompanied by a few lines written in a simple concise manner describing the species. At the end of the passage is a couplet, often humorous, that leaves you with something to ponder.

But perhaps what sets this book apart from others on wildlife are the icons at the end of each page that denote the name and location where the flora or fauna was spotted as well as the date the photograph was clicked, Sanket has also shared details of the camera, lens and aperture used, in the same icon format, making it easy for any reader to decipher.

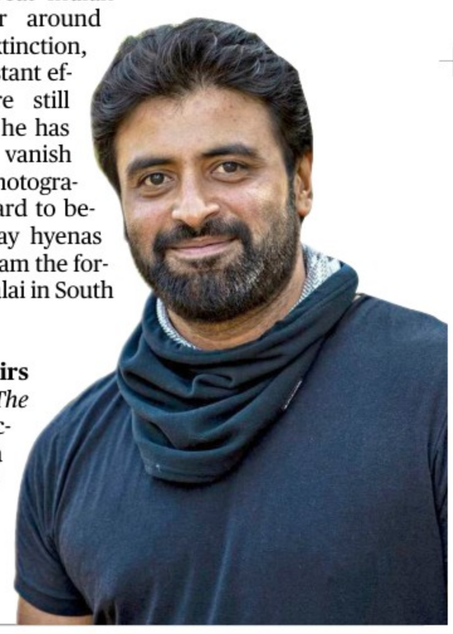
"Everything I know about photography is self-learned. Back in the day, there was no course one could take and even data online was quite limited. Finding the optimum settings was always a challenge for me and fellow photographers, who started around the same time," says Sanket, remembering how they would pore over images, wondering about its lighting or clarity.

"That inclusion was always a part of my plan from the moment I decided on the book. I wanted anyone who picked it up, even someone remotely interested in photography, to understand the camera settings."

The process of putting *The Viewfinder* together took a couple of years and went through a couple of iterations, but the final version was completed in about six months, says Sanket, adding that he is well into his next work.

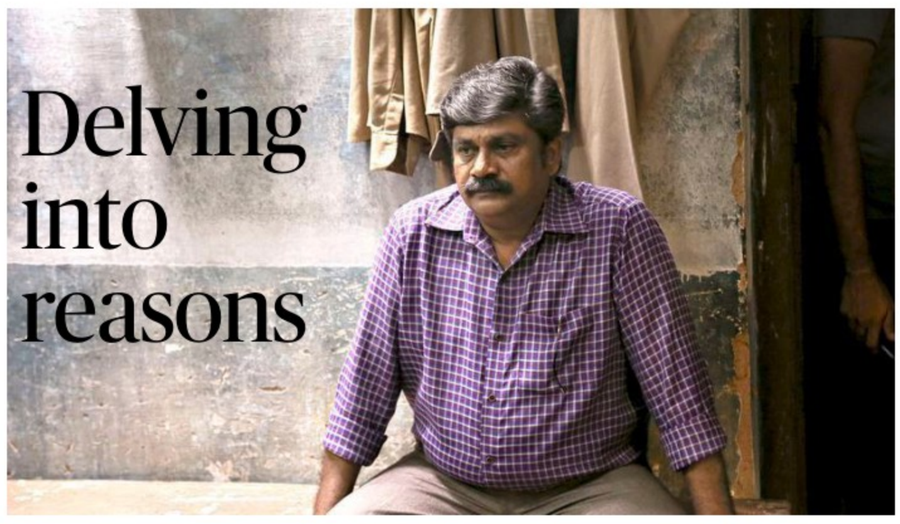
The fall of plumage, patterns on scales, the lace of insect wings, landscapes and terrain – all in a brilliant riot of colour, will make you fall in love with Nature all over again.

The Viewfinder by Sanket Reddy is available in bookstores and at whitefalconpublishing.com



FILM REVIEW

Delving into reasons



What lies beneath Rangayana Raghu in *Agnyathavasi*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Slick scenes, simple entertainment

Vivek MV

In *Agnyathavasi*, director Janardhan Chikkanna uses the setting as a powerful narrative tool. He turns to cinematographer Advaitha Gurumurthy and music composer Charan Raj to create an immersive experience for the viewers. The film, backed by Hemanth M Rao, boasts technical solidity, even as it tries hard to cope with the limitations of its small idea.

The death of an influential person wakes a sleepy town in the Malenadu region in Karnataka. For the locals leading a quiet and peaceful life, a murder in their town is an improbable occurrence. What's worse–and a tad funny–is how inconsequential the police station is in the village.

Yet, a senior cop (Rangayana Raghu), much to the shock of the locals, declares the death as a murder. Janardhan incorporates an additional layer to the story by connecting the murder with the lives of two youngsters, performed earnestly by Siddu Moolimani and Paavana Gowda.

Agnyathavasi isn't your traditional whodunit. The film's trailer makes it clear that the director isn't on the killer; he is more keen on understanding what forces someone to commit a murder. Till he arrives at that answer, Janardhan indulges in extensive world-building, turning *Agnyathavasi* into an atmospheric thriller.

Set in 1997, the film highlights the phenomenon of youngsters migrating to the US for jobs and education, fuelled by the IT boom.

Siddu Moolimani adds the right amount of energy to his character Rohit, who is curious and shy, making him a relatable 90s youngster. Rohit's room is decorated with pictures of Tendulkar and Ali. Advaitha Gurumurthy adds a soft and misty effect to his frames to establish a sense of a bygone era. Charan Raj's music beautifully complements the idea of nostalgia and the tension around a murder.

The film's writing leaves you with a lot of questions. The concept of letters exchanged through e-mail was a great idea, however, the communication between two lovers torn apart by circumstances isn't interesting. Humour at unexpected places dilutes the intensity of the story. The film's high moments come in between some notable flat scenes.

The underwhelming final act offers a tame end to the film. Even as the director delves into the aftermath of a murder, the conclusion will appeal to those who are more interested in the psyche of a criminal than the shock of the crime.

Agnyathavasi is currently running in theatres

Agnyathavasi (Kannada)
Director: Janardhan Chikkanna
Cast: Rangayana Raghu, Siddu Moolimani, Sharath Lohitashwa, Paavana Gowda
Runtime: 122 minutes
Storyline: As a police officer begins to investigate a crime in a sleepy town, he opens a Pandora's box of secrets buried in its past.

Vivek MV

Directors Esham and Haseen Khan enjoy generating humour out of desperate situations. Imagine a couple who can't stand each other but are locked inside a house due to a pandemic. That was *Ikkat* in 2021. Imagine a flashy, greedy, and lazy man becoming a pauper overnight. That's *Vidyapati* for you in 2025.

The film's USP is the unlikely rivalry at its centre. Siddu (Nagabhushana), a small-statured and cowardly man, must take on the burly and intimidating Jaggu (Garuda Ram), a feared goon-for-hire. Why? Siddu, who fooled his actor wife Vidya (played by a measured Malaika Vasupal) by portraying himself as a dream man who is kind and macho in equal measure, gets exposed when Vidya is humiliated by Jaggu's men one night. Siddu is helpless, with his face covered in shame. The marriage breaks off, and Siddu, who lives off his wife, is reduced to a homeless and penniless man.

The comedy in the movies of Esham and Haseen is physical. The protagonist is often a child trapped in a human body, à la Mr Bean. Siddu's bizarre actions and plans to become strong enough to face Jaggu will appeal to children, who are deprived of watching clean comedies.

That said, *Vidyapati* takes time to find its groove. In the first half, scenes lack brevity. The prolonged stretches dilute the effect of comedy. The film's writing needed more efficiency. Vidya's character gets sidelined almost entirely, making us wonder about her state of mind after her split from Siddu.

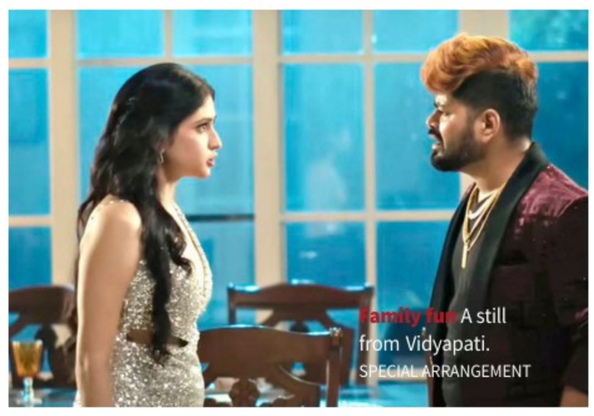
The movie comes into its own when its themes begin to pop up organically. What happens when a man flying high on free money is brought down to earth? He learns that nothing comes for free. What happens when a man has nothing to lose? He takes risks to fight for survival.

Nagabhushana holds the movie together in his best performance to date-.Only when Siddu realises his responsibilities, Nagabhushana handles the transformation with fine conviction. The serious actor in him is on full display as he makes you care for Siddu, who accepts his imperfections and begins to mend his life.

Vidyapati is far from a lazy effort by Esham and Haseen. The action, especially the one inside a Karate school, is slick. The training sequences of a rejuvenated Siddu are rousingly shot with music from Dossmode providing the required effect.

As a revenge drama, *Vidyapati* reminds you of Dilish Pothan's *Maheshinte Prathikaaram*, where the climactic showdown is stripped of macho tropes. *Vidyapati* offers something for everyone and succeeds in being a summer release for the families, who crave simple entertainment.

Vidyapati is currently running in theatres



Family fun A still from Vidyapati. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vidyapati (Kannada)
Directors: Esham and Haseen Khan
Cast: Nagabhushana, Dhananjaya, Malaika Vasupal, Garuda Ram, Srivatsa Shyam, Dharmanna
Runtime: 126 minutes
Storyline: Siddu is a free-loader who basks in the world of his actor wife Vidya. What happens when he rubs a local goon the wrong way? Will he show courage, take responsibilities and regain the trust of his wife?

All logged in, Kerala to be declared fully digital literate

S.R. Praveen
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

For the past few months, 67-year-old C. Sarasu, a Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) worker from Pullampara in Thiruvananthapuram, has been using her leisure time to video-call her relatives and watch YouTube videos.

In Muvattupuzha, 75-year-old Krishnakumar is now using WhatsApp to mobilise people from the neighbourhood for an anti-drugs campaign. Until recently, both of them were "digital illiterates" for whom technology was a hard nut to crack.

The two are now part of the over 21 lakh people who have completed the Local Self-Government Department's "Digi Kerala" digital literacy programme, making Kerala the first State to achieve total digital literacy. Speaking to *The Hindu*, LSG Minister M.B. Rajesh said the government was waiting for President Droupadi Murmu's confirmation for an event to make the official announcement.

Over 21 lakh senior citizens completed the government's 'Digi Kerala' digital literacy programme. R.K. NITHIN

"We have achieved much beyond the guidelines stipulated by the National Digital Literacy Mission for digital literacy, which require training to be imparted only for those up to 60 years of age. This programme has included people of all ages," Mr. Rajesh says.

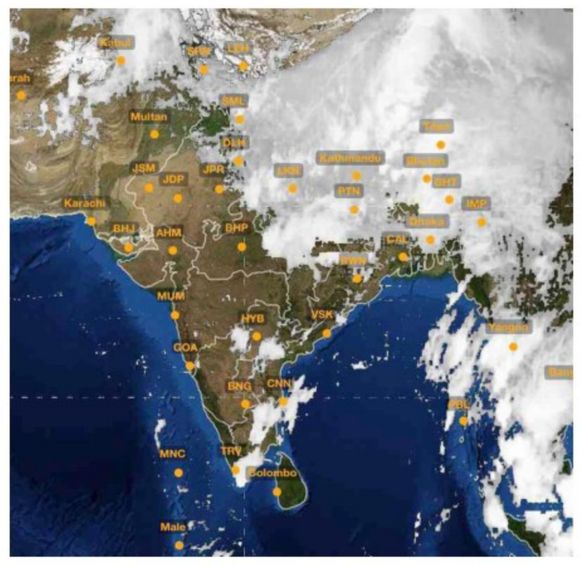
The Digi Kerala idea began as a pilot initiative of the Pullampara grama panchayat in the capital in 2022 to impart digital literacy to all residents. The trainees, most of whom were using digital equipment for the first time, were taught to make voice calls as well as video calls using smartphones, use WhatsApp, access government services, carry out Internet banking and use popular social media platforms.

The government later decided to expand the programme across the State. Through surveys, 21.88 lakh participants were identified as digitally illiterate. A large army of 2.57 lakh volunteers, including National Service Scheme members, Kudumbasree members, Kerala State Literacy Mission Preraks, members of the Library Council, and youth organisations coordinated to organise classes for them in households, MGNREGS work sites, libraries and Kudumbasree groups.

"After the training, the trainees were evaluated. As many as 98% of the participants passed the evaluation. A party verification was done by the Statistics Department to ensure that the figures are accurate. In wards where over 10% variation was seen, re-training was conducted. Offline training was provided in areas of low connectivity," says an official who coordinated the training programme.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam and Meghalaya. Heat wave conditions very likely in isolated pockets over Rajasthan and Telangana. Thundersquall accompanied with lightning, gusty winds in Odisha; with lightning and gusty winds and hailstorm at isolated places over Jharkhand.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	35.6	24.8	Kozhikode	1.0	35.2	27.4
Ahmedabad	—	41.6	26.0	Kurnool	—	39.6	27.1
Aizawl	—	33.6	18.5	Lucknow	—	36.2	22.7
Allahabad	4.5	38.6	20.8	Madurai	—	38.5	26.1
Bengaluru	4.0	33.6	20.3	Mangaluru	—	33.6	23.1
Bhopal	—	38.7	22.8	Mumbai	—	33.6	25.1
Bhubaneswar	6	36.2	22.9	Mysuru	—	35.2	—
Chandigarh	2.6	36.0	17.0	New Delhi	—	35.9	20.2
Chennai	—	36.8	27.5	Patna	—	32.2	23.6
Coimbatore	—	34.4	23.4	Port Blair	0.9	31.6	25.4
Dehradun	0.3	33.7	15.9	Puducherry	—	36.5	26.3
Gangtok	0.3	21.2	13.1	Pune	—	35.5	17.4
Goa	—	34.6	22.7	Raipur	—	39.8	25.5
Guwahati	27.0	30.5	19.5	Ranchi	9.0	32.1	18.6
Hubballi	—	38.0	21.0	Shillong	0.4	23.2	13.4
Hyderabad	—	37.3	23.7	Shimla	2.0	23.2	8.6
Imphal	—	31.9	21.0	Srinagar	—	26.8	8.4
Jaipur	—	—	—	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.2	25.6
Kochi	13.0	31.0	23.6	Tiruchi	—	37.7	27.0
Kohima	—	20.4	14.6	Vijayawada	—	38.4	28.0
Kolkata	—	35.2	25.4	Visakhapatnam	—	35.4	27.1

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.25	..51	44	... 217	...163	
Bengaluru	.30	8	61	 52	77	
Chennai	...6	6	38	 65	96	
Delhi	...6	..67	18	 61	96	
Hyderabad	.16	..26	62	... 440	.....—	
Kolkata	...8	..58	22	 37	55	
Lucknow	...4	..38	26	 76	...125	
Mumbai	...7	..18	24	 49	...111	
Pune	.29	7	70	... 135	.....—	
Visakhapatnam	..—	..—	17	..... —	.....—	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Gurugram, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 317 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 26.

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Eight killed in blast at firecracker unit in A.P.

Two critical; CM to extend ₹15 lakh as ex-gratia to next of kin of deceased

Harish Gilai
ANAKAPALLI

Eight persons were killed and as many injured in an explosion at a firecracker unit at Kailasapatnam of Anakapalli district in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. The condition of two of the injured is said to be critical.

As per the district police, the blast occurred 45 minutes past noon.

Sixteen workers were at the unit at the time, as per preliminary enquiries. The accident site is about 2 km from the village, and residents rushed there on hearing the blast. Later, the police and emergency services and fire tenders, rushed to the spot. The rescue operations were monitored by District Collector Vijaya Krishnan and Superintendent of Police Tuhin Sinha.

Fatal explosion: The site where the explosion occurred in Anakapalli district on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The injured were shifted to a PHC nearby, and then to hospitals in Narsipatnam and Anakapalli. Five persons have been shifted to King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam for advanced treatment. Among them, three were severely injured with 90%, 50% and 30% burns, respectively, while another sustained fractures. The fifth person had no major injuries.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has asked the Collector to conduct an inquiry and submit a report.

Home Minister V. Anitha and Anakapalli Member of Parliament C.M. Ramesh inspected the accident site. Ms. Anitha told reporters that though the exact cause of the accident was yet to be ascertained, they suspect it to be the fallout of "extra pressure applied in the preparation of the firecrackers."

"The CM has agreed to provide ₹15 lakh as ex gratia to the next of kin of the deceased," she added.

Dharmadam is Kerala's first poverty-free constituency

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday declared Dharmadam Kerala's first extreme poverty-free constituency, paving the way for the State to achieve full eradication of extreme poverty by November 1, 2025.

1,978 boats anchored as fishing ban starts in Vizag

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

A total of 1,978 boats will be anchored along the 24-km-long Visakhapatnam coast between Bhimili and Yarada beaches during the 61-day annual fishing ban period starting from April 15 to June 14.

The ban, aimed at sustaining the fishing industry, will see 675 mechanised boats anchored at the fishing harbour.

Of the 1,303 motorised boats – 696 will anchor at different locations in the city coast, 316 at Visakhapatnam fishing harbour, and 291 at Bheemili beaches.

Speaking to *The Hndu* on Sunday, Assistant Director Visakhapatnam Fisheries Department Vijaya Krishna said: "We have communicated to the fishermen to follow the ban on deep sea fishing to ensure good catches (particularly shrimp) in the post-ban period."

THE HOTEL INDUSTRIALISTS CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.,
Regd. Office: "Sahakara Sourabha", No.234, 2nd Cross, 4th Main, Chamarajapet, Bengaluru - 560 018.
Phone: 080-26678329, 26612482, 41277283, E-mail: ho@hicbank.com, Website: www.hicbank.com

POSSESSION NOTICE See Rule - 8(1) (For Immovable Property)

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the **The Hotel Industrialists Co-Op Bank Ltd.,** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the power conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 has issued a Demand Notices calling upon the Borrowers / Mortgagors / Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned In the notice within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on below mentioned dates.

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **The Hotel Industrialists Co-Op Bank Ltd.,** for an amount interest and Other Charges mentioned below.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

1) Name and Address of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : (1) Mr. N Chandrahas S/o N Nagappa No.534, "Sri Neelakanteshara Nilaya", Geddalahalli Gramatana, Sanjaynagar, Bangalore-560094.

Total amount mentioned in the notice : Rs. 7,97,418/- (Rupees Seven Lakhs Ninety Seven Thousand Four Hundred Eighteen Only) as on **31.12.2024** and interest thereon.

Branch: Balepete **Demand Notice Dated : 20.01.2025** **Possession Notice Date: 08.04.2025**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the House Property bearing No.534, (Old No.66, Katha No.42), PID No.100-636-534, situated at Geddalahalli Gramatana, Sanjaynagar Ward No.100, Bangalore-560094 and measuring on the East to West 9.14 Meters and on the North to South 12.19 Meters, in all measuring 111.42 square meters. Bounded on: East: Property belongs to Annapurna, Arathi and Aruna, West: House of Mr. Dinakar Shetty, North: Road, South: House of Mr. Ramaiah. Built Area GF=AC Sheet roof 480 sq.ft. + RCC Roof= 480 sq.ft.

2) Name and Address of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : (1) M/s. Manju Enterprises, Registered office at No.23 C/A, J C Industrial Layout, 3rd Main Road, 1st Stage, Yelachenahalli, Kanakapura Road, Bengaluru-560062 **Represented by its partners 1. Mr. R Madan** S/o A P Ramappa No.67, 4th Cross, Dollars Colony, J P Nagar, Bengaluru-560078 **(2) Mr. R Manjunath** S/o A P Ramappa No.217/57, 15th Main Road, 37th D Cross, 4th T Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560042.

Total amount mentioned in the notice: Rs. 2,98,95,941/- (Rupees Two Crore Ninety Eight Lakhs Ninety Five Thousand Nine Hundred Forty One Only) as on **30.11.2024** and interest thereon.

Branch: Jayanagar **Demand Notice Dated : 31.12.2024** **Possession Notice Date: 08.04.2025**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing New Municipal No. 453/23/285/438/397, corner Site No. 23, formed by Jayanagar Co-Op Housing Society Ltd., situated at Yelachenahalli, 3rd Main, Kanakapura Road, Ward No.185, Bengaluru-560062 and measuring on the East to West (18.28+15.54)/2 meters and on the North to South 28.65 meters, in all measuring 484.471 sq. meters and bounded as follows: East: Property bearing No.24, West: Road, North: Property bearing No.31, South: Road. Built Area: About 48 squares RCC Roofed Industrial Shed.

3) Name and Address of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : (1) Mr. Manjuanth R S/o A P Ramappa, No.217/57, 37th D Cross Road, 15th Main Road, 4th 'T' Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560041.

Total amount mentioned in the notice : Rs.3,07,45,030/- (Rupees Three Crore Seven Lakhs Forty Five Thousand Thirty Only) as on **30.11.2024** and interest thereon.

Branch: Jayanagar **Demand Notice Dated : 31.12.2024** **Possession Notice Date: 08.04.2025**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

SCHEDULE A: All that piece and parcel of the amalgamated immovable property bearing Industrial No.3 (Old No.3 and 12), situated at Karisandra Village, Now known as Banashankari 2nd Stage, Bangalore and in measuring (270'+280')/2X(160'+236')/2, totally measuring 52398 sq. ft. and bounded as follows: East: Property bearing No.4,5 and 6, West: 7th Main Road, North: 27th Cross Road, South: Property bearing Nos 4,5 and 6.

SCHEDULE B: 817/52398 share of undivided right title and interest in the Schedule 'A' Property equivalent to 817 square feet in land with right to construct and own Schedule C Flat.

SCHEDULE C: Flat No.C-03, on the Ground Floor, of the proposed building known as TEMPLE MEADOWS being constructed on the Schedule 'A' Property now BBMP No.3/5, PID No.56-152-3/5, situated at Industrial Layout, BSK 2nd Stage, Ganesh Mandir Ward No.56, Bengaluru, in the terms of the Sanctioned plan, consisting of hall cum dining room, three bed rooms, kitchen, bathrooms and toilets etc., along with common areas and facilities attributable, thereto with super built up area of 2445 sq. ft. and two car parking lots in the basement for the exclusive use and use the garden area measuring 108 sq. ft. the flat is of RCC Roofing, Vitrified Tiles, Teak Wood Doors and aluminum windows.

4) Name and Address of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : (1) Mr. Madan R S/o A P Ramappa, No.67, 4th Cross Road, 2nd Main Road, Dollars Layout, 4th Phase, J P Nagar, Bengaluru-560078.

Total amount mentioned in the notice : Rs.52,52,048/- (Rupees Fifty Two Lakhs Fifty Two Thousand Forty Eight Only) as on **30.11.2024** and interest thereon.

Branch: Jayanagar **Demand Notice Dated : 31.12.2024** **Possession Notice Date: 08.04.2025**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

SCHEDULE A: All that piece and parcel of the residentially converted land property bearing Sy. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, measuring 0-24 Guntas, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru and bounded as follows: East: Road, West: Property of Sri. Nanjundachary, North: Road, South: Property of Sri. Rajananda Reddy.

SCHEDULE B: (Undivided right, title and interest in the land, which is the subject matter of the release deed)

All the piece and parcel of 568 square feet of undivided right title and interest in the land in the Schedule A Property bearing SY. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru.

SCHEDULE C: (The Residential Apartment Unit, which is the subject matter of this Release deed)

All the piece and parcel of residential Apartment of FF-401, now bearing BBMP Katha No.21/26/3/FF-401, situated at 4th Floor, constructed in residential apartment building measuring 1542 sq. ft., super built up area (which is inclusive of the floors, ceiling and walls between the apartments and the common area attributable thereto) together with one Car parking situated at Anand Altair Apartment constructed in residentially converted land bearing Sy. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru-560062.

5) Name and Address of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : (1) Mr. Madan R S/o A P Ramappa No.67, 4th Cross Road, 2nd Main Road, Dollars Layout, 4th Phase, J P Nagar, Bengaluru-560078.

Total amount mentioned in the notice : Rs.43,92,269/- (Rupees Forty Three Lakhs Ninety Two Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Nine Only) as on **30.11.2024** and interest thereon.

Branch: Jayanagar **Demand Notice Dated : 31.12.2024** **Possession Notice Date: 08.04.2025**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

SCHEDULE A: All that piece and parcel of the residentially converted land property bearing Sy. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, measuring 0-24 Guntas, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru and bounded as follows: East: Road, West: Property of Sri. Nanjundachary, North: Road, South: Property of Sri. Rajananda Reddy.

SCHEDULE B: (Undivided right, title and interest in the land, which is the subject matter of the release deed)

All the piece and parcel of 455 square feet of undivided right title and interest in the land in the Schedule A Property bearing SY. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru.

SCHEDULE C: (The Residential Apartment Unit, which is the subject matter of this Release deed)

All the piece and parcel of residential Apartment of TF-313, now bearing BBMP Katha No.21/26/3/TF-313, situated at 3rd Floor, constructed in residential apartment building measuring 1237 sq. ft., super built up area (which is inclusive of the floors, ceiling and walls between the apartments and the common area attributable thereto) together with one Car parking situated at Anand Altair Apartment constructed in residentially converted land bearing Sy. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru-560062.

6) Name and Address of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : (1) Mr. Madan R S/o A P Ramappa, No.67, 4th Cross Road, 2nd Main Road, Dollars Layout, 4th Phase, J P Nagar, Bengaluru-560078.

Total amount mentioned in the notice : Rs.70,11,432/- (Rupees Seventy Lakhs Eleven Thousand Four Hundred Thirty Two Only) as on **30.11.2024** and interest thereon.

Branch: Jayanagar **Demand Notice Dated : 31.12.2024** **Possession Notice Date: 08.04.2025**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

SCHEDULE A: All that piece and parcel of the residentially converted land property bearing Sy. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, measuring 0-24 Guntas, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru and bounded as follows: East: Road, West: Property of Sri. Nanjundachary, North: Road, South: Property of Sri. Rajananda Reddy.

SCHEDULE B: (Undivided right, title and interest in the land, which is the subject matter of the release deed)

All the piece and parcel of 484 square feet of undivided right title and interest in the land in the Schedule A Property bearing SY. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru.

SCHEDULE C: (The Residential Apartment Unit, which is the subject matter of this Release deed)

All the piece and parcel of residential Apartment of FF-404, now bearing BBMP Katha No.21/26/3/FF-404, situated at 4th Floor, constructed in residential apartment building measuring 1316 sq. ft., super built up area (which is inclusive of the floors, ceiling and walls between the apartments and the common area attributable thereto) together with one Car parking situated at Anand Altair Apartment constructed in residentially converted land bearing Sy. No.26/3, BBMP Katha No.21/26/3, situated at BCMC Layout, Raghuvanahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, Bengaluru-560062.

Date : 08.04.2025 **Sd/- Authorised Officer**
Place : Bangalore **The Hotel Industrialists Co-Op Bank Ltd.**

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAKESH Chandra Pant, son of Late. Ambadatt Pant resident of Amba Sadan, Swastik Enclave, Kamaluwaganja Road, Harinagar , kusumkhera ,Haldwani, Nainital, Uttarakhand, 263139, hereby declare that the name "Rakesh Pant" appearing on my son Sarthak Pant's 10th marksheet refers to me, Rakesh Chandra Pant, and both names pertain to the same individual.

I, Hitherto Known As Rajashekaraiah Gangadhar Bidadhi Alias Gangadhar Bidadhi Rajashekaraiah S/O Rathnamma Bendekatte Residing Sg502 Purva Seasons Kaggadaspura Main Road Cv Raman Nagar Vtc Bangalore North Karnataka-560093, Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known Thomas Rajashekar For All Future Purposes

I, Hither To Known As Shweta Prasannakumar Jani C/O Vibhanshu Harishbabu Dave, Residing At Flat No 407 Block B Nandi Citadel, Nobel Residency Road, Chandrashekharpura Akshyavana, Vtc: Bangalore South, Po: Bannerghatta Road, District: Bengaluru, Ka 560076have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Shweta V Dave For All Future Purposes

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE :: GOOTY
O.S. No. 04/2024

BETWEEN:-
M.Malleswari ... Plaintiff
AND
M.Balarami Reddy & 26 others
...Defendants

To:**[D-2] K.DATHATHREYA,** S/o K.Sivalingappa, R/o D.No. 6/65, Nemakallu Village, Chippagiri Mandal, Kurnool Dist. **[D-3] EDIGA RAMANAMMA,** W/o Late E.Guru Swamy, R/o D.No. 8-4-52, Nehru Colony, Urvakonda Town and Mandal, Ananthapuramu District. **[D-4] KAPAM TIPPURAM,** S/o K.Sivarangappa, R/o D.No. 65, Near Kariyamma Temple, Nettivali Village, Devanagiri District, Karnataka State. **[D-5] K.JANARDHAN,** S/o K.Sivalingappa, R/o D.No. 705/3, 10th Cross, Mico Layout Police Station, B.T.M. 2nd State, Bangalore South. Bangalore City. Karnataka State. **[D-21]SHAKUN BEE,** D/o Late Mabbub Saheb, R/o 10th Ward, Gonekallu Road, Kurugu Village, Bellari Post and District. Karnataka State. **[D-27] K.SHILAAR BEE,** W/o Shaik Jeelan, R/o D.No.6/40, Nemakallu Village, Chippagiri Mandal, Kurnool District.

NOTICE TO THE 2, 3, 4, 5, 21 AND 27 DEFENDANTS

That the plaintiff has filed the above suit for declaration, declaring the registered sale deed as null and void. That the above suit is posted on **25-04-2025** for your appearance. Hence please appear on **25-04-2025 at 10-30 A.M.** before the above said court and file your objections if any otherwise the matter will be treated as exparte.

Sd/- B. SUDARSHAN RAO,
Advocate for Plaintiff
GOOTY, Cell:9959247281

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Forced get-together

Political expediency dictated the coming together of AIADMK and BJP

Union Home Minister Amit Shah displayed political urgency when he formalised the BJP's reunion with the AIADMK, a year ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly election. A cautious Edappadi K. Palaniswami, the leader of the AIADMK, was also persuaded to endorse a pre-poll agreement to form a coalition government. Coming just days after the AIADMK's Rajya Sabha MPs voted against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, the move places the Dravidian party firmly in the NDA camp and severely restricts any leeway for it to take an independent line on issues of public interest. The newly stitched-up alliance could also lead to an electoral polarisation, narrowing the field for fence-sitters and marginal players who now have to choose between the fronts led by the DMK and the AIADMK to make any impact at all in the first-past-the-post system. Besides the electoral arithmetic, the BJP high command must have been conscious that time is needed to revive the chemistry between the two parties and to mount a cohesive campaign to dislodge the DMK. The BJP might also have been uneasy with the DMK's growing national visibility, especially after its leader and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin launched the Joint Action Committee for Fair Delimitation with support from parties in seven States. Not surprisingly, Mr. Shah accused the DMK of raising the three-language policy, delimitation, and NEET exemption to divert attention from governance failures. But with the AIADMK's stand on these issues not very different from the DMK's, how these will be handled in a common minimum programme remains to be seen.

To dispel the perception that the BJP is exploiting a weakened AIADMK, Mr. Shah affirmed that the alliance would fight the elections under Mr. Palaniswami's leadership. He also avoided pushing for any patch-up with splinter groups of the AIADMK saying such matters were internal affairs. The timing of the alliance announcement overshadowed the transition in the BJP's State leadership – from K. Annamalai to Nainar Nagenthran – and Mr. Shah ensured that this did not appear as a concession to the AIADMK, which had strongly opposed Mr. Annamalai. But surely, the elevation of Mr. Nagenthran, a former AIADMK member, could smoothen relations. The NDA is likely to include the PMK and TMC (Moopanar); whether the AIADMK rebels, who joined hands with the BJP in the 2024 general election, will still find a place in the new alliance is unclear. The 2026 election is poised to be a two-way contest involving the DMK-led alliance and the NDA; the Naam Tamilar Katchi, with an 8% vote share, and actor Vijay's newly formed Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam will likely bring up the rear. With Mr. Shah levelling corruption charges against the DMK, there is also the likelihood of central agencies being more active in the State. Although the alliance is sewn up, the NDA could find it challenging to finalise a seat-sharing formula that is acceptable to the many claimants.

Communal cauldron

Political parties are fanning riots in West Bengal ahead of polls

The three deaths in Murshidabad district during protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act have exposed the deep political fault lines and the festering communal divide in West Bengal. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's repeated assurances that she would protect minority interests, and that the Act would not be implemented in the State, have done little to assuage the Muslim community. The violence, which began on April 8, continues unabated despite prohibitory orders and the suspension of Internet services. Mob attacks on public property have been reported from the Jangipur subdivision of Murshidabad and other parts of the State, including Kolkata. West Bengal has been a simmering communal cauldron for quite some time. Both the ruling Trinamool Congress and the Opposition BJP have sought to exploit communal polarisation for political gain. While the TMC tacitly encouraged Muslim protests against the Waqf amendments, the BJP backed communally charged Ram Navami processions across the State. Although the police have now warned of strict action against lawbreakers, their inaction before and during the current flare-up has been evident. The Calcutta High Court has since intervened, ordering the deployment of central armed police forces in Murshidabad.

The State remains on edge ahead of every major religious festival, and policing has grown weak and increasingly politicised. Even though Murshidabad witnessed similar violence in 2019 during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the administration has failed to prevent the current unrest. The violence is unfolding in one of the State's most impoverished regions, where men migrate for work and women earn a living by rolling beedis. As tensions have escalated over the Ram Navami processions and the Waqf amendment, political parties have chosen to fan the flames rather than promote calm. This is part of a larger and troubling trend seen across the country. The Mamata Banerjee government must act swiftly and impartially to restore normalcy. The rule of law must be firmly established, and the police must prevent violence. With Assembly elections due in a year, the BJP and the TMC appear intent on pandering to communal sentiments for political gain. This must change. The focus must shift to governance and development. As the party in power, the TMC cannot absolve itself of responsibility by merely blaming the BJP.

A Governor's conduct and a judgment of significance

Suhrith Parthasarathy

is an advocate practising in the Madras High Court

Last week, in a judgment of wide-ranging significance, in *The State of Tamil Nadu vs The Governor of Tamil Nadu and Anr.*, a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court of India, comprising Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice R. Mahadevan, reaffirmed the limits that bind gubernatorial authority. In doing so, the Court reminded us of a constitutional truth that ought to be self-evident: the Governor of a State is neither an appendage of the Union nor an independent power centre, but is constrained by legal norms and democratic principle.

A need to respect democratic obligations

At the heart of the case was a seemingly simple but institutionally weighty question: what happens when a Governor fails to act on a Bill duly passed by the State's legislature? The answers from the Court not only helped validate a clutch of Bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly – each of which had languished without assent – but also contained in them a broader message. The office of the Governor, while significant, is not exempt from the obligations of representative democracy. To withhold assent indefinitely, without reason, subverts the constitutional order.

Initially numbering 12, the contested Bills trace their origins to as far as 2020, with two enacted under the previous regime in the State. Among them were Bills that sought to supplant the Governor's power to appoint Vice-Chancellors to public universities – proposals that emanated out of a long-standing skirmish between the Raj Bhavan and the elected government over institutional control.

For years, the Governor took no discernible action. When the State government moved the Supreme Court in November 2023, he promptly referred two of the Bills to the President for her consideration. The Legislative Assembly, in turn, convened a special session to reenact the remaining 10 Bills. But when these were sent to the Governor, he swiftly passed them on to the President. Since then, the President assented to only one, rejected seven outright, and left two pending.

It was this sequence of events which formed the basis for the State government's case in the Court. The Governor, through his conduct, the State claimed, had undermined the people's will. His prolonged inaction, and ultimately delayed referral, therefore, demanded judicial scrutiny.

India's federal design rests on a delicate balance. The Constitution carefully demarcates legislative authority between the Union and the States. Article 245 prescribes the territorial jurisdiction of each, allowing Parliament to legislate for the entire country or any part thereof, while State legislatures are confined to their respective territories.

The scope of legislative powers is categorised into three distinct lists outlined in the Constitution's Seventh Schedule. The Union enjoys exclusive authority over items in List I, while subjects in List III allow for legislation by both the Union and State governments. Matters in List II, on the other hand, remain under the sole legislative domain of the States. However, in the event of conflict with a parliamentary law, primacy is given to the Union legislation.

> The top court has reiterated a constitutional truth — that the Governor of a State is constrained by legal norms and democratic principle

In this scheme, the Governor, though appointed by the President, functions as the constitutional head of the State. Barring specific instances where the Constitution expressly permits discretion, he is bound to act on the advice of the State's Council of Ministers.

A reading of Article 200

It is in this context that Article 200 of the Constitution, which deals with how a Governor ought to assent to a Bill, assumed significance before the Court. Much of the dispute turned on its interpretation. On a plain reading of Article 200, the Governor may: grant assent; withhold assent (and return the Bill to the Assembly for reconsideration), or reserve the Bill for the President's consideration.

The Union of India, in their response to Tamil Nadu's petition, contended that the first proviso to Article 200 provided the Governor an independent, fourth course of action: he could simply withhold his assent to a Bill, without referring it back to the Assembly. In other words, he could perform a pocket-veto.

But this argument had expressly been rejected by the Court in *State of Punjab vs Principal Secretary to the Governor of Punjab* (2023). There, it found that the proviso to Article 200 contains no independent power. Once an ordinary Bill is passed by the Assembly, the Governor has only one of three options available: to either assent to it, or reserve it for the President's consideration, or withhold the assent, in which case, the Governor must also refer it back to the Assembly for reconsideration.

It was also the Union's case that in deciding whether to reserve a Bill for the President's assent, the Governor could exercise an autonomous discretion. That is, he had the independent ability to decide what course of action to follow. In answering this argument, the Court harked to the debates in the Constituent Assembly. It noted that the draft version of Article 200 (then Article 175) had explicitly stated that the Governor "may, in his discretion" reserve a Bill for the consideration of the President. This phrase was consciously omitted in the adopted version. Its removal, the Court held, was deliberate, aimed at ensuring that the Governor's role was constrained by the advice of the elected executive.

Indeed, the Court identified only three narrow circumstances in which the Governor could act without ministerial counsel: first, where the second proviso to Article 200 applied, that is where a Bill derogated from a High Court's powers; second, where a Bill fell within a class for which presidential assent was explicitly mandated, such as under Article 31C where a law was sought to be protected from judicial review; and third, where a Bill so fundamentally undermined constitutional values.

This conclusion came with an important caveat. Even where a Governor exercises discretion, the action is still amenable to judicial review. Relying on its earlier judgment in *Rameshwar Prasad vs Union of India* (2006), the Court found that while Article 361 grants personal immunity to Governors, it does not insulate their actions from legal scrutiny. Consider the alternative: a Governor may simply paralyse the legislative process by sitting over Bills for years on end, all the while hiding behind the cloak of gubernatorial immunity, choking, in the process, the entire governance of a State.

In any event, in this case, the Court found that there was no discretion available to the Governor. Having chosen to withhold assent, he could not plausibly have then referred the Bills to the President, on their being re-presented to him. There was no trace of executive advice backing his decisions nor were his acts grounded in any identifiable, let alone defensible, constitutional rationale. Having found the Governor's actions unconstitutional, the Court could no doubt have considered issuing what the law describes as a writ of mandamus, compelling him to grant his assent to the Bills. But given the substantial time that had lapsed and given that previous Court decisions had been overlooked, the Court chose the ostensibly extreme option. With a view to achieving complete justice – a power available to it under Article 142 – it declared that these 10 Bills would be deemed to have been assented to on the date when they were re-presented to the Governor.

Some might see this as judicial overreach, but issuing a mandamus might well have been rather more unworkable. Should the Court's orders be breached, it cannot plausibly hold the Governor in contempt. Therefore, the ultimate direction must be seen as a logical *sequitur* to the Court's findings: on the Bills being passed anew by the State Assembly, and on the Council of Ministers recommending their assent, the Governor was left with no discretion in the matter.

The larger message

The significance of the judgment for the specific Bills, which were at stake, is plain to see. But the verdict also carries with it a larger message. It upholds a fact intrinsic to our Republic: that the Governor, though appointed by the Union government, functions on the aid and advice of the State executive; the office is meant to serve not as a source of political disputes, but as a constitutional sentinel, upholding the values of representative democracy.

Adding a French touch to India's Olympic dream

Samuel Ducroquet

is France's Ambassador-at-Large for Sport

The 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games were extraordinary organisational, popular and sporting successes, and hailed as such worldwide. The stunning venues and ceremonies in the heart of the city of love and across France, the memorable prowess of the athletes, and the unbridled enthusiasm throughout the country thrilled spectators and television viewers around the world. The Games built bridges and brought people together – which is all the more important in the current geopolitical context.

France is grateful that India fully participated in the festivities and contributed to the success of the Games. The Indian Paralympic delegation made a record-breaking performance in Paris, reaching the 18th position in the medals tally. Further, under an international cooperation framework, India sent K9 teams (canine) abroad for the first time to patrol various Olympic venues, reinforcing France's meticulously-planned security arrangements. The first Indian hospitality centre in the Games' history, India House, was set up during the 2024 Olympics and opened to visitors strolling through the iconic "Nations Park".

Expertise that will be shared

Paris 2024 was also the most sustainable and inclusive Games. It reduced the carbon footprint of the Games by 54.6% when compared with the average for the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Games, setting new standards for international sporting events and their impact on the people. It made history by achieving gender parity with the equal participation of male and female athletes, and invested massively to make the Games accessible for spectators with disabilities. These achievements were made possible by bold and innovative approaches and the great collective effort of France's central and regional governments, the Olympic Organising Committee, various sports movements and sponsoring companies. France has developed very special and comprehensive expertise that it now aims to share with its partners under its sports diplomacy. This is one of the main objectives of my visit to India.

> Paris is working to boost India-France sports cooperation and share its expertise in organising major sporting events

India's Olympic bid

France has also noted how sports have been playing an increasingly important role in Indian society and economy, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently upholding sports as an "essential aspect in the development of the country". Besides India's 2036 Games bid and, more broadly, the organisation of international sporting events, the Indian authorities and sports movements are proactively developing sporting practices and focusing on improving performance, as recently demonstrated by the decision to establish 10 Olympic training centres across the nation.

Sports are hence another area of cooperation with promising prospects. Mutual interest in deepening exchanges have been expressed at the highest levels: President Emmanuel Macron and Mr. Modi highlighted this during the French President's visit to India in January 2024 and more recently, Mr. Modi's visit to France in February 2025.

In July 2023, a joint declaration of intent on sports was concluded between our respective sports ministries to increase exchanges between sports delegations and federations, economic actors of the sports industry, and experts of international sporting events. In January 2024, the India-France Joint Statement welcomed the strengthening of sports cooperation and reaffirmed that France would share its experience of hosting the Paris 2024 Games with India as it bids to host the 2036 Games.

Against this backdrop, my mission in Delhi and Chennai as Ambassador-at-Large for Sport aims to enhance France's understanding of India's sports ecosystem and meet its various institutional and economical players to deepen already identified areas of cooperation and explore new ones.

The sharing of expertise in organising major international sporting events, as well as their long-term social and environmental legacy, has already begun. Institutional exchanges have been taking place, with several delegations from India's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports having visited France in September 2024 during the Paralympic Games. As India's 2036 project takes shape, my visit will help identify India's needs more precisely, so that our dialogue can advance in line with India's targeted priorities.

A vibrant industry that has much to offer

The medium-term idea is also to bring new players to the table, particularly economic ones. The French sports industry is particularly dynamic: in 2023, it generated a turnover of €75 billion (₹6.7 lakh crore approximately at that time), which is much higher, for example, than that of the aerospace industry (€65 billion). With around 1,28,000 companies of all sizes, its offering is diverse, ranging from construction, major equipment, data analysis, to ticketing and consumer experience. While some of these companies, such as Decathlon, are already household names in the Indian market, many are looking to expand here soon. We are also seeing promising new partnerships, including the recent one between Tata Consultancy Services and Amaury Sport Organisation for the Paris Marathon.

Lastly, enhancing exchanges between our two countries' sports movements and professionals – such as athletes or coaches – is a constant priority for France's sports diplomacy, the main goal being to boost youth exchanges with India. In this regard, one of the most recent success stories is that of the Indian and French surfing federations, which signed a cooperation agreement last November, under which four Indians under 21 years of age were invited to participate in an international competition in Reunion Island, a French overseas territory in the Indian Ocean.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Court and the Governor

Once again, the judiciary has saved democracy. The Supreme Court's ruling on the exercise of powers by Governors to clear Bills within a reasonable time or be subject to judicial review has provided relief to States. The Court has laid to rest the ambiguity that enabled Governors to 'harass' non-BJP ruled States by delaying Bills. It is observed that the BJP intends to convey to voters that only a 'double engine sarkar' can govern without obstructions. Other governments will be frustrated through its 'institutions' of the Governor, the Enforcement Directorate and other central agencies.

P.R. Ravinder,
Hyderabad

The verdict is a clear case of judicial overreach. The two-judge Bench could have referred the matter to the constitutional full Bench for prudent adjudication.

Devadas K. Nair,
Palakkad, Kerala

The Tamil Nadu government's decision to pass the Bills without the assent of either the Governor or the President cannot be taken lightly. It was unwise indeed to undermine the authority of a constitutional functionary as it amounts to disrespecting the Constitution of India itself.

V. Lakshmanan,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

Corrections & Clarifications

A sentence in the second paragraph of an explainer, "What has the SC ruled on the T.N. Governor?" ('FAQ' page, April 13, 2025), should have read: "In all other cases, once a Bill has been passed by both Houses of the legislature, the Governor can exercise one of three options: grant assent, withhold assent and return the Bill to the Assembly for reconsideration, or reserve it for the President's consideration."

Saving traditional varieties of seeds

Imagine an India where every farmer grows the same handful of crops – wheat, rice, and a few vegetables – while thousands of traditional seed varieties disappear. This is not a distant future; it is happening now.

For centuries, India's seeds of traditional varieties have been the backbone for food security and a key component of the country's rich cultural heritage. While new hybrid varieties have held the promise of high yields, they have come with a cost – greater dependence on chemical fertilisers, water-dependant farming, increased vulnerability to climate shocks, and altered food quality and nutrient content. The irony? At a time when extreme weather events are threatening food production, we are sidelining the very varieties that can withstand droughts, floods, and replenish depleted soils.

Costanza Conti

Policy Research Lead at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)

E.D. Israel Oliver King

Biodiversity Program Director, MSSRF

Rengalakshmi

Executive Director, Area Operations, MSSRF

Structure of the food system

Even when we know their benefits, why are traditional varieties disappearing? The truth is: the problem is not just about seeds of traditional varieties; it is about how the entire food system is structured, creating issues that make it hard, if not impossible, for traditional seeds to survive. The first issue is of market demand and consumer preferences. Most Indian consumers unknowingly contribute to the loss of traditional seeds. Supermarkets, government food programmes, and households favour high-yielding rice and wheat, sidelining traditional, climate-resilient grains of millets, pulses and indigenous rice varieties. As there is no demand, farmers hesitate to grow these varieties.

The second issue is that unlike hybrid seeds that are mass-produced and sold commercially, traditional seeds rely on community exchange and local conservation. However, India lacks enough well-funded community seed banks to store and conserve these varieties.

Third, India's agricultural policies have historically promoted high-yielding varieties, in a well-meaning attempt to prioritise food production and boost food security. However, this has inadvertently caused a trade-off in terms of biodiversity and nutritional quality. While initiatives such as the Odisha Millet Mission have attempted to change this, most government subsidies and procurement programmes are slow to catch up. Even agricultural research and development has focused more on increasing productivity of a few crops, rather than focusing on conserving and improving genetic diversity and enhancing climate resilience.

Conservation efforts

While challenges persist, the fight to save India's traditional seed varieties is not lost. Many organisations have been leading the way in conserving and reviving indigenous varieties and neglected crops for over 30 years. For instance, MSSRF's Tribal Agrobiodiversity Centre in Jeypore, Odisha, recently held a national consultation, which brought together different stakeholders and fostered discussion on how to build climate resilient, sustainable, and inclusive seed systems. From this consultation, a road map started to emerge on the way forward.

No single solution will work to save India's seeds of traditional varieties and crops – recognising farmers' knowledge and rights, strengthening community seed bank networks, initiating alternative seed systems to support local crops and varieties, providing market incentives, and promoting policy changes are all actions that must go hand in hand.

For too long, India's research and development efforts have focused on improved/high-yield varieties that prioritise productivity over climate resilience. A shift is needed – one that funds participatory plant breeding programmes where farmers work alongside scientists to share knowledge and develop improved traditional seeds.

Well-funded and easily reachable seed banks are critical to prevent seed losses for farmers. Governments must support the establishment of a network of regional conservation centres to prevent India from losing its genetic heritage forever.

Farmers will not grow crops that they cannot sell. The government must create support systems for processing and marketing and provide financial incentives for traditional crop cultivation, recognising their climate-resilient, environmental and nutrition benefits. Expanding Minimum Support Prices and procurement programmes for including these crops into school meals, hospitals, and ration shops can drive large-scale change.

Ultimately, the battle for traditional crops and varieties will be won in kitchens. Awareness campaigns and branding initiatives should highlight the health and environmental benefits of traditional crops. When consumers demand these such produce, the markets will respond, creating a cycle of production and consumption.

Time for action

India stands at a turning point. Rising cost of farming inputs, climate change, depleting soil health, and unhealthy food consumption make it clear that we cannot afford to rely only on high-yield crop varieties and market preferred crops. The good news? We do not need to choose between food security and sustainability. By investing in seeds of traditional crops and varieties, India can create a sustainable food system that is not just productive but also resilient, nutritious, and aligned with its agricultural heritage. The time for piecemeal solutions is over. We need coordinated national efforts and alliances between diverse stakeholders to restore the balance in our food system.

At a time when extreme weather events are threatening food production, we are sidelining the very varieties that can withstand droughts, floods, and replenish depleted soils

Playing politics on the runway

The government should pay heed to the needs of passengers and not politicians

STATE OF PLAY

Hemanth C.S.
hemanth.cs@thehindu.co.in

Seldom do infrastructure projects, especially in the mobility sector, catch the attention of lawmakers. The lack of attempts being made to fix Bengaluru's potholed roads or speed up the progress of the metro rail project indicate this apathy in the Karnataka's capital city.

However, one large project is drawing the attention of lawmakers. Even those outside the city seem interested in getting a slice of this massive real estate pie, which could be around 5,000 acres of land.

This project is the second greenfield international airport in Bengaluru, which is a necessity for the city as the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) will not be able to accommodate more than its peak capacity of 80 million-90 million passengers by the turn of the next decade.

With no scope for the KIA's expansion, the Karnataka government began exploring potential sites for the second airport a decade early, which is a welcome sign.

Having finalised three potential sites for the second airport – two on Kanakapura Road in south Bengaluru and one on Nelamangala-Kunigal Road – the Karnataka State Small Industries Development Corporation, the industrial and investment promotion agency of the State government, recently invited an Airports Authority of India (AAI) team to inspect them and conduct a feasibility study on these sites.

To coincide with the AAI team's visit, 42 legislators from various political parties led by veteran Congress leader T.B. Jayachandra petitioned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to develop the airport at Sira in Tumakuru district, which is about 120 kilometres from Bengaluru. Prior to this, Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara had also pitched for Tumakuru, his home district located north of Bengaluru, as the best location for a second airport.

The lobbying for the airport to be developed in these locations has deeper political overtones, especially given the ongoing battle over chief ministership between the incumbent, Mr. Siddaramaiah, and his deputy, D.K. Shivakumar. Two of the three shortlisted sites which were inspected by the AAI team are part of, or are close to, Mr. Shivakumar's Assembly constituency, Kanakapura. Those who oppose the development of the airport in south Bengaluru have hinted that Mr. Shivakumar will stand to gain if the project comes up there.

Meanwhile, Infrastructure Development Minister M.B. Patil said that the second airport is being constructed for the city and the decision is not about personal preferences. He said that the government would go by the Centre's directives, viability and feasibility reports, and a detailed project report prepared by global consultants. He also shot down the demands of the 42 legislators, stating that setting up a greenfield international airport in Sira is not viable and that a district-level airport could, at best, be built there.

That leaves south Bengaluru as the most viable option. Is this a step in the right direction? Experts and IT heads and a majority of those living in the southern part of the city believe it is. Prior to the opening of the KIA in Devanahalli, located in north Bengaluru, there were calls for keeping operational the existing Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) airport, located in the eastern part of the city, for commercial operations or at least short-haul flights. Protesters demanding this argued that commuting to KIA would be tedious for those living in south and east Bengaluru due to traffic woes. But the HAL airport had to close commercial operations due to an agreement between the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation and Bengaluru International Airport Limited, the operator of KIA. As per the agreement signed on July 5, 2004, no airport can operate within an aerial distance of 150 km of the airport before the 25th anniversary of KIA, which falls in May 2033. As this agreement expires in 2033, KIA too will run out of capacity, paving the way for the second airport.

Residents of south Bengaluru point out that building an airport beyond the existing one does not address their concern. Besides, constructing an airport in southern Bengaluru would also thwart competition from the proposed Hosur airport, which the Tamil Nadu government is pursuing. After all, commuting to the proposed Hosur airport to board a domestic flight would be a better option for residents of the southern part of the city than travelling more than two hours to reach KIA or an airport beyond it.

Urban consumers are worried about their income levels

The fact that incomes are stagnant while prices have increased suggests that city residents are struggling to meet expenses

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

This March, while a significant share of urban consumers remained optimistic about job opportunities, many continued to be pessimistic about income levels. This suggests that although jobs are available in urban areas, income growth has stagnated. Notably, pessimism around income levels is even more pronounced in rural areas.

Moreover, a majority of urban consumers said that commodity prices have risen compared to a year ago and, as a result, their spending has increased. Coupled with stagnant incomes, this has led to a greater share of urban consumers feeling pessimistic about the overall economic situation of the country despite improved sentiment regarding employment.

Urban perceptions are drawn from a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) survey conducted between March 1 and 10, 2025, covering respondents from 19 major cities. Rural perceptions are based on the first edition of a separate RBI survey, which gathered responses from households in rural and semi-urban areas across the country in the same period.

Chart 1 shows the share of urban respondents who said that their employment opportunities have increased compared to a year ago. In March, 35.5% of respondents had said that their employment scenario had improved compared to a year ago, maintaining almost the same level recorded in the last one year.

Chart 2 shows the share of urban respondents who said that their income levels have increased compared to a year ago. Only 23.8% claimed that their income levels have increased compared to a year ago – close to 12% points less than those who said that the job outlook has improved.

The steady recovery in perceptions about income levels, since the pandemic-related peak pessimism, saw a reversal in March 2024. From that month, optimism about income levels started to dip again. This negative trend persisted into March 2025 as well, with fewer than one in four urban respondents reporting any improvement in their income levels.

Charts 1 and 2, when read together, suggest that while a decent number of jobs are available in urban areas, income levels remain largely stagnant, as noted earlier.

Chart 3 presents the share of urban and rural respondents who reported a decline in their income compared to a year ago. Across all surveyed months, a consistently higher proportion of rural respondents expressed pessimism about their income levels compared to their urban counterparts. In March this year, 29.9% of rural respondents said that their income levels have declined compared to a year ago, higher than the 23.3% who said the same in urban areas.

Chart 4 illustrates the share of urban respondents who said that commodity prices have increased over the past year. As of March, over 90% continued to report that prices were higher than a year ago.

This perception appears to have influenced spending behaviour. **Chart 5** shows the share of urban respondents who said that their spending has increased compared to the previous year. In March, over 80% reported higher spending levels compared to a year ago.

Charts 4 and 5 indicate that rising prices have led to higher spending. However, as Chart 2 shows, income levels are stagnant. This suggests that many urban residents may be struggling to make ends meet despite retaining their jobs. This had an effect on the overall economic perception of urban residents. Only 34.7% of them said in March that the overall economic situation has improved this year, compared to last year. This is the lowest such share of respondents in over a year **(Chart 6)**.

Spending more, **earning less**

Data for the tables were sourced from the Reserve Bank of India's urban and rural consumer confidence surveys

Chart 1: Share who said that their employment opportunities have increased compared to a year ago **(urban)**

Chart 2: Share who said that their income levels have increased compared to a year ago **(urban)**

Chart 3: Share of **urban/rural** respondents who reported a decline in their income compared to a year ago

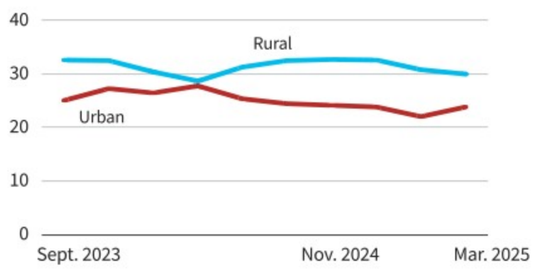


Chart 4: Share of respondents who said that commodity prices have increased over the past year **(urban)**

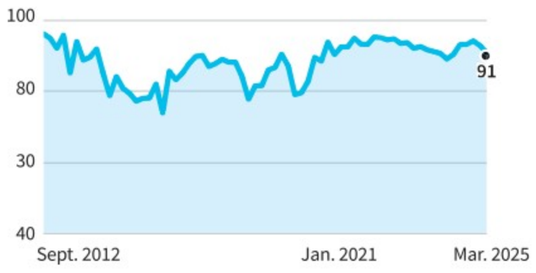


Chart 5: Share of **urban** respondents who said that their spending has increased compared to the previous year

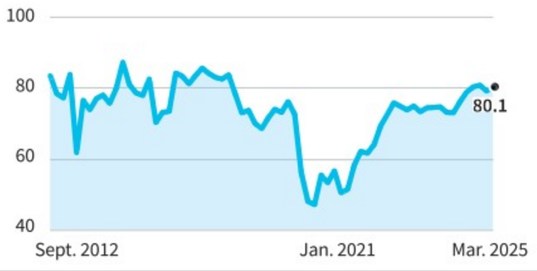
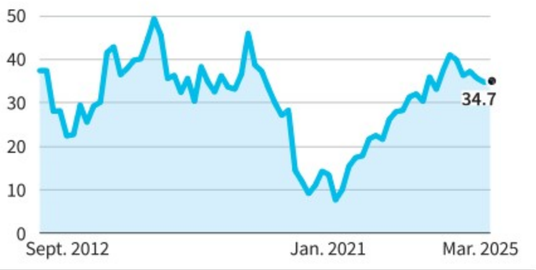


Chart 6: Share of **urban** respondents who said that the economic situation has improved compared to a year ago



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 14, 1975

Anti-Indian incidents in Canada

New York, April 13: The steady arrival of immigrants from India is causing tension and touching off violent incidents in parts of Canada.

A report from Vancouver in the New York Times yesterday said the influx from India "has exposed a vein of prejudice, bringing new problems, and even a bit of violence to Vancouver's streets." The Times carried a news feature displaying the photograph of a Sikh family peering through a glass window broken by vandals. According to the report, "the anti-Indian incidents – schoolyard taunts and fistfights, window-breaking in the night and attacks with paint – reflect new feelings that have become part of an agonising national debate now under way about whether, and how, to change Canada's entrance requirements which are among the most liberal in the world."

To help in drawing up new legislation making it harder for foreigners to get in, the Canadian Government has asked the people for suggestions, encouraging a public discussion. However, there are reports that the Canadian Government has already decided in principle to limit the number of immigrants, especially from Asia, Africa and the West Indies.

According to the Times report, immigrants from India, who in the 1950s numbered only a few hundreds a year, now constitute the fourth largest group in the immigration statistics – after people from Britain, the United States, and Portugal. In 1974, there were 14,000 immigrants, an increase of 150 per cent over 1972, and many of them attracted by friends and relatives from home, moved into southeast Vancouver, a middle-class neighbourhood that was, like most of Canada, almost entirely white.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 14, 1925

India tea in America

London, April 12: Sir Charles Higbam, who returned to England from the United States, said that he had been endeavouring among other things for the popularity of 4 o'clock tea habit in America. The sales of Indian tea had increased in America by 3,000,000 pounds in 1924. Afternoon tea had become part of the routine of many large business houses and banks found it increased the efficiency of the staff. Early morning tea was also becoming popular and the Press in America was advocating tea drinking.

From Page One

CAPF deployed in Murshidabad

State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar alleged that the violence was a "conspiracy of radical outfits such as the Popular Front of India [PFI] and the Students Islamic Movement of India [SIMI]".

A section of BJP leaders also claimed that hundreds of Hindus from Dhulian in Murshidabad have been forced to take shelter across the river at Baishnabnagar in neighbouring Malda district.

"The BJP is spreading disinformation and attributing some photos to the Murshidabad unrest, whereas the reality is far from it. For instance, they are using photos from anti-CAA protests in Lucknow, as those of Murshidabad," a Trinamool leader alleged.

"The Bengal government is clear that no one will be allowed to take law into their hands and violence will be met with strict punishment," Trinamool Rajya Sabha member Sagarika Ghose said.

Kerala seeks to have Bills deemed as passed

The Supreme Court, legal experts pointed out, had made it clear that the President would be required to assign clear and sufficiently detailed reasons while withholding assent to a Bill.

Among Bills the President has withheld assent to are the University Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021; University Laws (Amendment no. 2) Bill, 2021; Kerala Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022; and the University Laws (Amendment no. 3) Bill, 2022, which were referred to her by the Governor.

The State would also contend that the principles laid down by the top court in the Tamil Nadu case should be equally applied to the Kerala case, and the Bills should be deemed to have been assented to on the date they were presented to the Governor, said top law officers of the State.

The Supreme Court's order fixing a time-frame for the President and the Governors to act in the case of Bills passed by the State legislatures in Tamil Nadu's case has come as a shot in the arm for the Kerala government. Kerala would argue that applying the Supreme Court's guidelines framed in the Tamil Nadu case to its own grievances would reveal that the acts of Mr. Khan too were bad in law and hence liable to be quashed, sources said.

Further, it will also point out that Mr. Khan had referred three Bills to the President, which he had initially promulgated as ordinances.

'Pause, review, repeal amendment to RTI Act'

Civil society groups voiced concerns regarding the amendment to the RTI Act, which would strike out all but the first six words in Section 8(1)(j), which exempts "information which relates to personal information the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless" officials are convinced that the "larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information: Provided that the information which cannot be denied to Parliament or a State Legislature shall not be denied to any person".

Thanking the Union Minister for his response, Mr. Ramesh on Sunday said, "I now wish to make four points by way of a counter-response to your defence of the RTI-destroying amendment."

"First, Section 3 of the DPDP Act, 2023, cited in your letter as protecting disclosures under the RTI Act 2005, is wholly irrelevant since Section 8(1) of the RTI Act, 2005 itself has been amended drastically," he said. "Section 3 of the DPDP Act will now only protect disclosures as per the amended RTI Act, which exempts all personal information from being accessible."

Second, the operation of the RTI Act, 2005 – informed by several judgments by the Supreme Court and various High Courts – has demonstrated that the law is able to withhold the disclosure of personal information which has no relationship to any public activity or public interest, Mr. Ramesh said.

Third, the deletion of the proviso in Section 8(1) of the RTI Act which recognises the citizens' right to information as being at par with that of legislators is "completely unwarranted", the Congress general secretary said in the letter to Mr. Vaishnaw. "In fact, that proviso is applicable not just to the personal information exemption, but all exemptions in Section 8(1) of the RTI Act, 2005."

Mr. Vaishnaw had argued that the Supreme Court judgment in the *Puttaswamy v. Union of India* case in 2017 effectively nullified much of the exemption. Hence, the amendment was included in the DPDP Act, 2023.

In response to this, Mr. Ramesh said, "Fourth, you mention the *Puttaswamy* judgment of the Supreme Court. Please do remember that nowhere in this judgment is it mentioned that the RTI Act, 2005 itself needs to be amended."

"The judgement reinforces that safeguarding personal privacy and promoting institutional transparency are not mutually exclusive but are jointly essential," he said.

The DPDP Act, 2023, has not yet been notified, but as soon as it is – a draft notification has already undergone consultations, and is expected to be finalised in the coming weeks – the provision will be cut down.

Russia targeted Indian pharma firm's warehouse in Kyiv: Ukrainian Embassy

The incident occurred on the eve of the 78th anniversary of India-Russia diplomatic ties; Kusum Healthcare's representative in Sumy says the main warehouse has been completely destroyed

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Russia has "deliberately" bombed a major Indian-owned pharmaceutical warehouse in Ukraine, the Embassy of Ukraine announced in New Delhi on Sunday. The assertion from the Ukrainian side coincided with the 78th anniversary of India-Russia diplomatic ties marked by the Embassy of Russia on Sunday.

The attack on Kusum Healthcare's storehouse in Kyiv showed the "all out" nature of the war between Ukraine and Russia, which has escalated in recent weeks, a Ukraine-based representative of Kusum Healthcare told *The Hindu*.

"Today [Sunday], a Russian missile struck the warehouse of Indian pharmaceutical company Kusum in Ukraine. While claiming 'special friendship' with India, Moscow deliberately targets Indian businesses – destroying medicines meant for children and the elderly," the Embassy of Ukraine in India said in a message.

Akhilendra Mall, the Kusum Healthcare representative based in the northern Ukrainian city of Sumy, told *The Hindu* over phone that the warehouse in Kyiv that had been destroyed in the early hours of Saturday was the company's central warehouse in Ukraine, apart from a smaller warehouse that the company owned on the outskirts of Kyiv.

Intense destruction: Firefighters put out the fire following a missile attack by Russia in Sumy, Ukraine on Sunday. AP

Total loss

"The main warehouse has been completely destroyed. We are yet to evaluate the total loss. There is heavy Russian bombing taking place in different locations of Ukraine and it will take some time before the company can determine the scale of the destruction," Mr. Mall said over the phone.

Kusum Healthcare owns a factory in Sumy where the company manufactures medicines for the Ukrainian market.

"Our factory in Sumy is fully operational as of now, despite the heavy conflict taking place here," Mr. Mall said.

The bombing from the Russian side is accompanied by firing of tank shells as well as drone warfare.

Mr. Mall, who represents Kusum Healthcare, has been based in Ukraine for 17 years. He said the attack on the Indian medicine storehouse showed the intensity of the current state of the war. "This is really an all out war on the ground. There are at least 200 rockets that are landing in Sumy throughout the day,"

The Russian Embassy has not yet responded to questions from *The Hindu* regarding the bombing of the pharmaceutical warehouse in Kyiv.

16 held after clashes during religious procession in M.P.

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

The organisers did not take formal permission from the local administration, a police official said

At least 16 people have been arrested so far in connection with clashes that took place between members of two communities during a Hanuman Jayanti procession in Madhya Pradesh's Guna on Saturday night, the police said on Sunday.

The Guna Kotwali police station in-charge, Brajmohan Singh Bhadoriya, told *The Hindu* that nine men were arrested late on Saturday night, while seven arrests were made on Sunday.

"We have arrested 16 men so far. The prime accused, Vicky Pathan, was arrested last night. The situation is now peaceful in the area but personnel have been deployed in adequate numbers to avoid any untoward incident. We have also called personnel from the neighbouring Shivpuri district," he said.

The clashes took place in the Colonelganj area around 7.30 p.m. on Saturday when a Hanuman Jayanti procession of about 100 people was passing by a place of worship, the police said.

Guna Additional Superintendent of Police Maan Singh Thakur said an altercation broke out between members of two communities over loud music, that led to sloganeering and stone-throwing.

He said 13 people suffered minor injuries in the clashes. A first information report against five identified and over 20 unidentified persons was filed on Saturday night based on a complaint by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) councillor Omprakash Kushwaha, who was among the procession's organisers.

CCTV footage

Mr. Thakur said that the police identified the accused based on CCTV and mobile footage, and that efforts were on to see if more people were involved in the incident.

Mr. Thakur said the procession had also been taken out without permission.

Guna Superintendent of Police Sanjeev Sinha said on Saturday night the procession was "taken out forcefully" and that "sloganeering was done" near a place of worship of another community, which led to the altercation.

Mr. Sinha further said that no action has yet been taken against the organisers for taking out the procession "without permission".

Mr. Bhadoriya said another complaint had been received and that action will be taken as per evidence.

Centre to celebrate Ambedkar's anniversary

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The 135th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a champion of social justice, will be commemorated at Prerna Sthal on the Parliament House lawns here on Monday.

President Droupadi Murmu, Vic- President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, and other dignitaries will pay floral tributes to Dr. Ambedkar in a morning ceremony. The venue will remain open to the public till noon, according to a statement. The Dr. Ambedkar Foundation will facilitate visitors paying their respects at the site and has arranged special bus services to the Dr. Ambedkar National Memorial.

Congress slams denial of permission for Palm Sunday rally; Minister cites security reasons

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Criticising the Delhi Police's decision to deny permission for the Palm Sunday procession organised by the Sacred Heart Cathedral in the national capital, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said it was not an "isolated incident" but "targeted discrimination".

Mr. Venugopal has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, protesting against the Delhi Police's decision.

"The BJP can't even keep up its so-called pro-Christian gimmick for a single week. First the *Organiser* article targeting church properties and now the Delhi Police has denied permission for the sacred procession on the holy day of Palm Sunday," Mr. Venugopal said, sharing his letter to Mr. Shah on X.

> The decision to prohibit this procession represents a serious attack on religious freedom... This is targeted discrimination
>
> **K.C. VENUGOPAL**
> Congress leader

Delhi Police spokesperson Sanjay Tyagi told *The Hindu* that permission had never been given for the procession. "The procession started a few years back and the organisers never got the permission in the past as well. No police personnel stopped the procession physically; the organisers themselves did not proceed with it," Mr. Tyagi said.

Mr. Venugopal also questioned whether Christians in Delhi were excluded from Article 25 of the Constitution that guarantees freedom of religion. "Since when did practising faith become a threat? This is not an isolated incident – it's targeted discrimination," the Congress leader said on X.

In his letter, he said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had participated in Christmas and Easter celebrations at the Sacred Heart Cathedral. "The decision to prohibit this procession represents a serious attack on the religious freedom guaranteed under the Constitution," Mr. Venugopal said.

He said there were no "concrete reasons" to deny permission for a procession that had been peacefully held for the past 15 years.

Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs George Kurian also dismissed the allegations on the denial of permission for the Palm Sunday procession from the St. Mary's Church to the Sacred Heart Church in New Delhi, stating that the decision had been based solely on reasons of security.

"Security is very tight in Delhi, and permission was denied due to security reasons," Mr. Kurian told presspersons in Thiruvananthapuram. Even a Hanuman Jayanti procession scheduled for Saturday had not been granted approval, he said. "All processions of this nature have been restricted," he added.

The alleged denial of permission has drawn criticism from various quarters, including from Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly.

Earlier, Mr. Vijayan condemned the Delhi Police's decision.

"Permission was denied for the procession from St. Mary's Church to the Sacred Heart Church. This violates the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom and secular values," Mr. Vijayan said.

He added that such actions, which "infringe upon minority beliefs, are unbecoming of a pluralistic society".

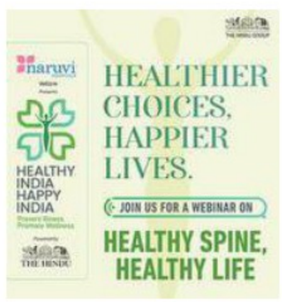
Meanwhile, BJP Kerala president Rajeev Chandrasekhar alleged that the Congress and the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) were "politicising" even Palm Sunday.

(With PTI inputs)

Experts share insights on spinal health and its impact on human well-being

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

As part of the "Healthy India, Happy India" initiative, a webinar titled "Healthy Spine, Healthy Life" was organised by Naruvi Hospitals, Vellore, in collaboration with *The Hindu*. The session brought together three expert doctors who shared insights into spinal health and its vital role in overall well-being.



Boopesh P., consultant, neurosurgery, Naruvi Hospitals, focused on workplace ergonomics. "Spinal health is essential for maintaining overall quality of life," he noted, adding that caring for the spine positively influences physical, mental, and emotional health. He identified key ergonomic risk factors such as poor posture, repetitive strain, excessive force, and compression. Dr. Boopesh also demonstrated proper desk posture and safe lifting techniques to avoid strain or injury.

Backiaraj D., spine surgeon at Naruvi Hospitals, addressed the factors affecting spine health. "A healthy spine has discs that are cushiony and flexible, enabling smooth movement," he said. He further explained that strong supporting muscles play a vital role in maintaining spinal integrity.

"Maintaining good posture involves aligning the joints, engaging the core, relaxing the shoulders, and ensuring the head and neck are in proper alignment," he noted. He also highlighted that lifestyle habits such as smoking, vaping, and stress can adversely affect spine health.

Vinitha Varghese, consultant, physical medicine and rehabilitation, Naruvi Hospitals, emphasised the importance of exercise for spinal health.

She introduced the Flamingo Test, a simple technique to assess balance by standing on one leg with eyes closed. "There's no ideal age to begin exercising," she said, urging people to first assess their joint mobility and flexibility before starting a fitness routine.

Protesters, police clash in anti-Waqf Act agitation in Assam

Press Trust of India
GUWAHATI

Protesters threw stones while the police used batons at a rally held against the Waqf (Amendment) Act on Sunday in Assam, a senior official said.

The official said that several hundred people hit the streets in Berenga area of Silchar town without permission to protest the recently enacted legislation.

"Around 300-400 people were protesting by blocking the road. When we tried to clear the path, a few of them threw stones at us. We had to use mild lathi-charge to disperse the crowd," he added.

He said that a case has been registered, but no one has been detained or arrested yet.

The protesters showed black flags and shouted slogans against the BJP government, demanding repeal of the Act.

State Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed that the State police had a "strong intelligence" report that there could be "some disturbances" during protests.

Amid political divide, Pawar duo shares stage again

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) supremo Sharad Pawar and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who are political adversaries, shared a stage on Saturday, marking their second joint public appearance this week. The senior Pawar and his nephew attended the Managing Council meeting of Rayat Shikshan Sanstha at Chhatrapati Shivaji College.

At the meeting, the council approved several educational initiatives. Mr. Sharad Pawar, a former Union Minister, announced the launch of a monthly magazine, *Rayat*.

The two, who have been on opposite sides of the political spectrum since Mr. Ajit Pawar's 2023 defection to the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance, maintained a cordial demeanour at the event.

This comes just days after Mr. Sharad Pawar attended the engagement of Mr. Ajit Pawar's younger son, Jay Pawar, near Pune.

The repeated public appearances of the politically estranged Pawars have sparked speculation about their personal equation.

Amid turmoil over 'Signalgate', U.S. NSA puts off visit to India

Michael Waltz was set to visit New Delhi from April 21–23 for official meetings; he is facing backlash over chats on Signal involving sensitive information; J.D. Vance may fill in for Waltz at the Indo-U.S. forum during his largely 'private' visit to India

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Amidst turmoil in Washington over communication security breaches by the National Security Council involving even his office, U.S. National Security Adviser Michael Waltz has put off his visit to India scheduled for next week, a number of sources confirmed to *The Hindu*.

Mr. Waltz was due to visit New Delhi from April 21 to 23 for official meetings and to address the annual U.S.-India Forum sponsored by the External Affairs Ministry and organised by the Ananta Centre.

The U.S. NSA's office conveyed to the External Affairs Ministry and the office of India's NSA, Ajit Doval, a few days ago that he would postpone his visit, the sources said.

It was expected that Mr. Waltz would hold meetings and call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Apart from meeting Mr. Doval and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Mr. Waltz was expected to attend a preliminary meeting of the Transforming Relations Utilising Strategic Technologies (TRUST) mechanism, the successor to the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) mechanism that the government had launched with the Joe Biden administration in 2023.

Under scrutiny: According to sources, the U.S. National Security Adviser may now reschedule his visit in the next few months. AFP

Mr. Waltz was due to be a speaker at the U.S.-India Forum, a conference held every year behind closed doors.

His predecessor in the Biden Administration, Jake Sullivan, had visited Delhi in January for a farewell visit.

'Difficult to comment'

Officials said that since Mr. Waltz's visit had not been formally announced, it would be difficult to comment on the reasons for the cancellation.

Speculation has been rife in U.S. newspapers about Mr. Waltz's position being tenuous after the "Signalgate" controversy. He has accepted the blame for inadvertently adding a senior journalist to a chat on the messaging platform Signal.

In the chat, details of the upcoming bombing operations on Houthis in Yemen were discussed by Mr. Waltz, Vice-President J.D. Vance, Defence Secretary Peter Hegseth, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and other senior members of U.S. President Donald Trump's Cabinet in real time.

Reports added that Mr. Waltz had maintained several other such insecure Signal chats for other foreign policy issues involving Ukraine, China and Gaza, and that the National Security Adviser used his personal Gmail accounts for sensitive communication.

While the White House has stood by Mr. Waltz, the reports have considerably embarrassed the administration and could be a reason for Mr. Waltz's decision to put off the India visit.

According to sources, he may now reschedule his visit in the next few months, and could time it along with the next edition of Indus-X, a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Defense and the Indian Ministry of Defence, that brings businesses involved in defence innovation and strategic technologies together.

Efforts under way

Officials said some efforts are under way to see if Vice-President J.D. Vance can fill in for Mr. Waltz's spot at the Indo-U.S. Forum.

Mr. Vance is travelling to India for a largely "private" visit with his wife and their three children, visiting tourist destinations in North India as well as Usha Chillikuri Vance's home State of Andhra Pradesh.

The Vances are expected to be hosted by Prime Minister Modi on the 21st of April before Mr. Modi leaves for Saudi Arabia (April 22-23).

CAG must probe how govt. policies aided oil companies: Cong.

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Jairam Ramesh

Accusing the government of "looting" people by increasing excise duty on petrol and diesel, the Congress on Sunday called for fixing accountability, and demanded that the Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG) audit how government policies benefited private companies.

The party also demanded that the Central Vigilance Commission and Central Bureau of Investigation investigate whether there was deliberate negligence or collusion in this matter.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said on X, "The people of India are being looted – on one hand, the Modi government is increasing the tax burden and picking people's pockets, while on the other hand, private and government oil companies are making profits! This is open economic exploitation!"

"The truth is: In May 2014, the excise duty on petrol was ₹9.20 and on diesel ₹3.46. Under the Modi government, this has risen to ₹19.90 on petrol and ₹15.80 on diesel – an increase of 54% and 357%, respectively!" he said.

He said the government had earned ₹39.54 lakh crore from the petroleum sector over the past 11 years, but failed to give any relief to people. "In May 2014, crude oil was $108/barrel, today it is only $65.31 – i.e. 40% cheaper, yet the prices of petrol and diesel are higher than the UPA era," Mr. Ramesh said.

"In 2014, petrol in Delhi was ₹71.41 and diesel ₹55.49 per litre. Today, the same petrol is ₹94.77 and diesel ₹87.67 per litre – the public is being openly looted," he asked.

He said along with government companies, the private oil companies are also earning huge profits from refining and marketing, while the common man is burdened with expensive petrol and diesel.

Homage to martyrs

Police personnel pay tribute on Sunday to martyrs at the Jallianwala Bagh memorial in Amritsar on the massacre anniversary. President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the nation would forever remember the victims of the 1919 massacre. AFP

Centre planning ₹10-lakh-cr. investment to rejuvenate highways, says Nitin Gadkari

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre is planning to invest ₹10 lakh crore over the next two years to strengthen highways across the country, with special focus on the Northeast, where roads will rival those in the U.S., Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has said.

There is an urgent need to augment the road infrastructure in the Northeast, given its difficult terrain and proximity to borders, he said in an interview to PTI. He said the Centre was working to transform the country's infrastructure drastically in the next two years.

"It is our endeavour to transform the country's infrastructure drastically so that it matches the best in the world," he said, maintaining that works are under way in all States, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Delhi.

Nitin Gadkari

Mr. Gadkari said 784 highway projects were going to be implemented in the eastern States at an estimated cost of ₹3,73,484 crore, covering 21,355 km. Among them are projects of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the National Highways Authority of India, and the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd., he said.

"We currently have projects worth ₹57,696 crore in Assam, and about ₹90,000 crore in Bihar. We're also undertaking projects worth over ₹42,000 crore in West Bengal, about ₹53,000 crore in Jharkhand, and around ₹58,000 crore in Odisha," Mr. Gadkari said.

"In the Northeast, except Assam, we are undertaking projects worth about ₹1 lakh crore this year itself," he said.

Mr. Gadkari said a mass rapid transport pilot project was under way in Nagpur at a cost of ₹170 crore. "The project involves a 135-seater bus that will run on non-polluting energy sources and is expected to be highly cost-effective. If successful, it will be replicated on important routes across the country, including the Delhi-Jaipur stretch, under the Build-Operate-Transfer model," he said.

The Minister said the length of the National Highway network has expanded, growing from 91,287 km in March 2014 to 1,46,204 km at present, with a significant improvement in standards.

Manipur Congress to move SC over Waqf Act

Press Trust of India
IMPHAL

Senior Congress leader Okram Ibobi Singh on Sunday said that the Manipur unit of the party would file a petition with the Supreme Court against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. The former three-time Chief Minister said that the Act was a gross violation of the Constitution.

"We are totally opposed to this Act. India is a secular nation, but the present NDA government is attacking Muslims and other minorities. The State unit of the Congress is preparing to fight the legislation. A team will leave for Delhi and by Wednesday, a petition will be filed at the top court challenging this Act," he told presspersons.

The leader also questioned the imposition of President's Rule in the State and wondered why the BJP was not forming the government despite having sufficient numbers to do so.

Cooperative movement was 'almost dead' before Modi govt., says Shah

Press Trust of India
BHOPAL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah distributes a Kisan Card to a beneficiary during a conference in Bhopal on Sunday. ANI

In a veiled swipe at previous Congress-led governments, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday that the cooperative movement had remained in a shambles as laws had not been tweaked for years and "almost died" before the Narendra Modi government took decisive actions.

Addressing a State-level cooperative conference in Bhopal, Mr. Shah said the erstwhile governments never considered bolstering the cooperative sector.

On the occasion, an agreement was signed between the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and the Madhya Pradesh State Co-operative Dairy Federation to enhance milk production in the State.

"For years, the cooperative movement was moving slowly and turned almost dead. Looking at the cooperative movement nationwide, it was uneven (in the past)," he said.

He said the movement gained traction only after 75 years of Independence, when Prime Minister Modi formed the Ministry of Cooperatives to strengthen the sector.

"In some States, the movement gained momentum, while in some places, it has been destroyed. The main reason was that the laws, which should have been changed with time, were not tweaked," Mr. Shah said while crediting Mr. Modi for bringing a "positive change" in the cooperative movement.

Madhya Pradesh has a lot of possibilities in the agriculture, animal husbandry and cooperative fields, Mr. Shah said, acknowledging the need to undertake more efforts to exploit these possibilities to the fullest.

"Madhya Pradesh is seeing good governance now. The cooperatives were almost dead during the Congress regime. This is a golden opportunity for their revival, and Madhya Pradesh should take this opportunity," he said.

As cooperation is a State subject under the Constitutional arrangement, initiatives were not taken to frame cooperative laws adapting to rapidly changing conditions across the country.

"This (scenario) was not considered from a holistic perspective at the national level, because there was no separate Ministry for cooperatives," he said.

Stating that the Centre works within the Constitutional framework, Mr. Shah said the Union government has enacted model bylaws for cooperatives, which are accepted by all States.

"By accepting these model bylaws that empower primary societies, States have given a new lease of life to the cooperative sector in India," he said while thanking the States.

Mr. Shah said the Modi government was "standing like a rock" in supporting the cooperative sector's expansion.

FIR against Kanhaiya Kumar for allegedly abusing PM and RSS

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

The Bihar Police on Sunday lodged a first information report (FIR) against Congress leader Kanhaiya Kumar on a complaint filed by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Bihar State media incharge Danish Iqbal at the Kotwali police station here.

In the complaint, Mr. Iqbal alleged that during an interview given to a Hindi news channel, Mr. Kumar called the Prime Minister a terrorist and used objectionable language for the workers of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"Calling the Prime Minister a terrorist is not only a shameful statement, but it is a direct attack on the sovereignty of the country. Strict action should be taken against such leaders who try to defame a nationalist organisation like the RSS," Mr. Iqbal said.

"We have full faith that the law will take action against such anti-national mentality people," he said. He added that Mr. Kumar had repeatedly worked to insult the country.

Based on the complaint, the police lodged the FIR under Section 352 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The penalty for violating this Section was imprisonment for up to two years, a fine, or both.

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
6th, 7th, & 8th Floor, Tower-B, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi-110029
सत्यमेव जयते

Petition No. 313/TD/2025 Dated: 11.4.2025

NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003 (the Act)

An application for the grant of a Category-V licence for inter-State trading in electricity across India has been made before the Commission by Clean Max Fusion Power LLP (CMFPL), 13A, Floor -13, Plot 400, The Peregrine Apartment, Kismat Cinema, Prabhadevi, Mumbai– 400025, Maharashtra.

2. A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State trading licence to Clean Max Fusion Power LLP before the Commission can be accessed at the website **www.cleanmax.com** or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.
3. On consideration of the material available on record, the Commission is satisfied that prima facie the applicant qualifies for the grant of a licence for inter-State trading in electricity and by order dated 9.4.2025, the Commission has proposed to grant a Category-V licence to the applicant for inter-State trading in electricity across India.
4. Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act to invite suggestions or objections, if any, to the proposal to grant the licence for inter-State trading in electricity as aforesaid by the Commission to be received by the undersigned latest by **21.4.2025** at the above noted address. The objections or suggestions received after the specified date shall not be considered.
5. The Commission has fixed the application for final disposal on **22.4.2025** and the person who files the suggestions or objections may in his discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

INBRIEF

FPIs withdraw ₹31,575 crore from equities this month

Foreign investors have pulled out ₹31,575 crore from the country's equity markets so far this month, in the wake of turbulence created by sweeping tariffs imposed by the U.S. on most nations, including India. This came following a net investment of ₹30,927 crore in the six trading sessions from March 21 to 28. This infusion helped reduce the overall outflow for March to ₹3,973 crore, according to data from the depositories. Compared to previous months, this marks a notable improvement. In February, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) took out ₹34,574 crore, while in January, the outflow was even higher at ₹78,027 crore. This shift in investor sentiment highlights the volatility in global financial markets. The total withdrawn by FPIs has reached ₹1.48 lakh crore in 2025. PTI

Mayawati readmits nephew into BSP after his apology

BSP leader Mayawati has readmitted her nephew Akash Anand into the party after he tendered a public apology for statements that caused his expulsion. Ms. Mayawati said on X, "I have taken the decision to give another opportunity to Mr. Akash Anand in response to his publicly admitting his mistakes in his posts on X and showing full respect to his seniors, not giving in to his father-in-law's words and dedicating his life to the BSP party and movement." The BSP president added, "I am healthy now, and as long as I am healthy, like Kanshi Ram *ji*, I will continue to work for the party and the movement with full devotion and commitment. In such a situation, there is no question of appointing someone as my successor". PTI

Punjab, Haryana farmers eye bumper wheat harvest after a favourable winter

Experts say the yield in both States could surpass the figures of 2023-24; untimely rain and hailstorms over the past two days have raised concern that the standing crop may be damaged

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

Bountiful harvest: Farmers engaged in threshing the freshly harvested wheat crop at a village on the outskirts of Gurugram on April 4. PTI

Favourable winter weather conditions during the rabi season in the key wheat-producing States of Punjab and Haryana are expected to boost wheat yields this harvest, experts say. However, untimely rain and hailstorms in parts of both States over the past two days have raised concern among farmers about the potential damage to the standing crop, which could lead to losses.

The harvesting of wheat, the main rabi crop sown between late October and December, has already commenced in Punjab and Haryana. According to government data, wheat production in Punjab in 2023-24 was over 181 lakh tonnes, while Haryana saw nearly 124 lakh tonnes of wheat output. Agricultural experts expect the harvest in both States to be higher than that of the previous year.

Ratan Tiwari, Director, Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research, Karnal, Haryana, said the two States were heading for a good harvest this season on account of the preceding favourable weather days.

"Weather conditions were conducive all through the winter. Temperatures, particularly the minimum [temperature], remained favourable. Secondly, the days were relatively bright, and there were fewer foggy days when compared with the previous years. Although the maximum temperature has been fluctuating, climate resilient varieties have sustained well," Mr. Tiwari told *The Hindu*.

"Last year, the average yield in Punjab was 50 quintal per hectare. This year, it could be over 60 quintal per hectare. Similarly, last year, the average yield in Haryana was around 46 quintal per hectare, which this year could go up to 50 quintal per hectare," he added.

Thrives in cold weather

P.S. Rangi, agricultural expert and former adviser to the Punjab State Farmers Commission, explained that wheat is a temperature-sensitive crop and thrives in cold conditions. "This time, cold conditions have prevailed during the entire crop season, which is a good sign for bumper wheat production. Intermittent, timely rains have resulted in good development of grain, which will boost the per-hectare yields of wheat," Mr. Rangi said.

Punjab and Haryana are major contributors of wheat to the Central procurement pool. "There was fairly widespread rain, accompanied by hail and winds during the past 48 hours in parts of Punjab and Haryana. However, clear weather conditions are expected now in the coming days," Surinder Paul, Director, IMD, Chandigarh, said.

Undertake survey to assess MGNREGS effectiveness: panel

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The panel pointed out that the scheme has been plagued by delays in wage payments.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development has recommended an independent survey to assess the effectiveness of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and its shortcomings.

This survey, the panel said, should focus on worker satisfaction, wage delays, participation trends, and financial irregularities within the scheme.

The panel's report was tabled on April 4, the concluding day of the Budget Session of Parliament. The panel, headed by Congress MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, has argued that such a survey should focus on the necessary policy reforms, and should be introduced based on the insights from the survey.

Equal opportunities

The panel also said that despite the stated objective of the scheme to uplift marginalised communities, the participation of women workers and those from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes remained "inconsistent across districts".

"A district-wise study must be conducted to ensure that these communities receive equal work opportunities and benefits under the scheme, thereby fulfilling its intended goal of social and economic inclusion," the report said.

The panel also stressed the need to revamp the scheme, keeping in view the "changing times and emerging challenges". "This committee urges the Ministry to explore the options that could increase the number of guaranteed working days under MGNREGA to at least 150 days from the current 100 days," the report said.

The parliamentary panel also pointed out that the scheme has been plagued by chronic delays in wage payments, leading to uncertainty for the workers. It has recommended that the current compensation rate for delayed wages should be increased. The Committee strongly recommended that timely disbursement of these payments was essential to maintain trust in the scheme and ensure uninterrupted execution of work.

India, Africa maritime engagement exercise begins off Tanzania coast

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

INS Chennai arrives in Dar-es-Salaam for the inaugural edition of the large-scale multilateral exercise AIKEYME. PTI

The inaugural edition of the large-scale multilateral exercise Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) began on Sunday off Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

Coinciding with the naval exercise, offshore patrol vessel *INS Sunayna*, designated as Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR and sailing with 44 naval personnel from nine friendly nations, reached the port on Saturday.

"AIKEYME aims to develop collaborative solutions to common regional maritime challenges. This maiden initiative by the Indian Navy seeks to enhance interoperability and synergise combined operations among the maritime forces of partner nations," the Navy said in a statement.

"It also highlights the strong and friendly relations between India and the African nations." The six-day AIKEYME exercise from April 13 to 18 includes participation from Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa, alongside the co-hosts India and Tanzania. "This initiative aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, promoting Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR)," the Navy said.

The *Indian Naval Ship Chennai* (destroyer) and *INS Kesari* (Landing Ship Tank - Large) arrived in Dar-es-Salaam ahead of the exercise, and the inauguration ceremony of AIKEYME was co-hosted onboard, along with the Tanzanian Peoples' Defence Force (TPDF).

A Ceremonial Guard was also paraded onboard *INS Chennai* with TPDF and Indian Navy band playing in unison the national anthems of respective countries.

DRDO tests laser weapon system that can disable missiles and drones

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A view of the Laser-Directed Energy Weapon system developed by the DRDO to shoot down aerial targets in Kurnool. ANI X

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Sunday announced the successful trial of the Mk-II(A) Laser-Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) system "mastering the technology of disabling missiles, drones and smaller projectiles".

The success has put India in the exclusive club of nations which have the high-power Laser-DEW system, the DRDO said in a statement.

"Indigenously designed and developed Mk-II(A) DEW system was demonstrated in its entire spectrum of capability by engaging the fixed wing drones at long range, thwarting a multiple drone attack and destroying enemy surveillance sensors and antennae," the statement said.

"The lightning speed of engagement, the precision and the lethality delivered at the target within few seconds made it the most potent counter drone system."

"Cost of firing it for few seconds is equivalent to the cost of couple of litres of petrol. Therefore, it has the potential to be a long-term and low-cost alternative to defeat the target," the DRDO said.

Detailing the functioning of the system, the statement said once detected by a radar or by its inbuilt Electro Optic (EO) system, laser-DEW can engage targets at the speed of light and use an intense laser beam to cut through the target, leading to structural failure or more impactful results if the warhead is targeted.

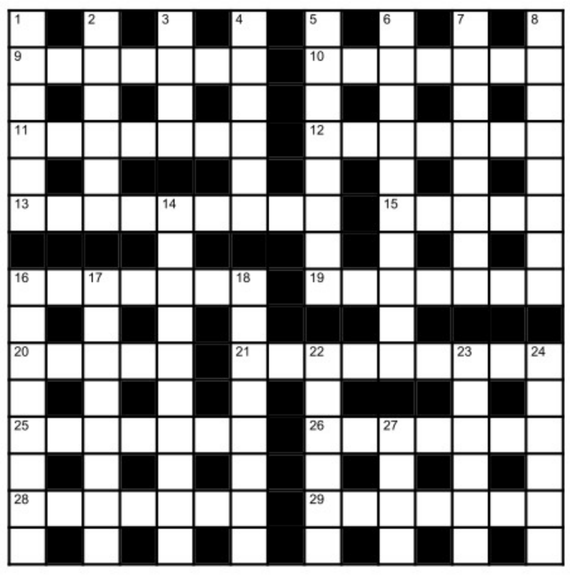
This type of cutting-edge weaponry has the potential to revolutionise the battlespace by reducing the reliance on expensive ammunition, while also lowering the risk of collateral damage, it stated. The trial was carried at the National Open Air Range, Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh.

TH CROSSWORD + 14458

(set by Arden)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

9 Loves to protect the tail enders in play (7)
10 Material for soldiers - new incursion into Palestine area? (7)
11 Internal pressure is same - acting all around leading to a gridlock (7)
12 Take it as supreme manifestation (7)
13 International rating agency's copy right to even things out (9)
15 Work on the game, get the fruit (5)
16 Non-lethal launcher for touring around (4,3)
19 Ways to express falsehoods about civil society body (7)
20 Beginners falter and in no time pass out (5)
21 Cops failing on detail (4,5)
25 Nothing to hide - sort out air passage (7)
26 Marine pollution - regularly follow over part of the ship (7)
28 Supporters in the US find their origins without hesitation (7)
29 Electric shock perhaps plays a role (7)

Down

1 Is blocking block? Come up with questions (6)
2 Composer's copyright and an invitation for a ride... (6)
3 ...and discharge about fifty (4)
4 Become vigorous like one among the sheep (4,2)
5 Constant pressure over men said to be substantial (8)
6 Pacts are good to intercept spies (10)
7 Union settlement has to stop insinuation (8)
8 Very hungry, becomes a nervous wreck (8)
14 "Summon a machinist" is an absorbing book (4-6)
16 On Sunday, best plant (8)
17 Love calling, oversight? (8)
18 Harry, not Elvis is the story teller (8)
22 Loose clothing can cover the back (6)
23 Awful result in N. Ireland (6)
24 Crazy to come up and demand such fabric (6)
27 Pledge one and take half first of all (4)

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

No.SS6489 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle

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O		E		R		C		N
P	O	R	T	U	G	A	L	
H		A		S		M		F
I	N	T	E	M	P	E	R	A
C		E		O		L		C
			O	U	T	O	F	T
E		A		S		T		I
M	U	L	C	T	S		C	O
E		E		A		A		N
T	Y	P	E	C	A	S	T	
I		P		H		T		
C	H	O	L	E	R	I	C	

S	H	B	A	B	Y			
	P		A		T		I	
C	O	R	V	E	T	T	E	
	N		E		I		L	
B	A	L	L	A	D			
	F		S		A		S	
A	N	C	E					
	R		E		D			
T	H	E	B	L	U	E		
	W		E		F			
C	O	L	L	A	P	S	E	
	O		H		R			
S	T		M	O	H	A	I	R
	S		N		A			
V	E	S	T	A	L			

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	7	2	6	1	9	8	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	2	1	9	3
8	9	1	5	4	3	6	7	2
5	6	4	1	9	8	2	3	7
9	3	7	2	6	5	4	1	8
2	1	8	4	3	7	9	5	6
6	8	3	9	7	4	5	2	1
7	4	5	8	2	1	3	6	9
1	2	9	3	5	6	7	8	4

FAITH

Tamil New Year significance

Our sastras say Brahma created the world during the sunrise on the first day of the Tamil month of Chittirai. This day is celebrated as the Tamil New Year, based on the calculation of the rotation of the earth around the sun. From the time the sun enters the Tamil zodiac of Mesham, to its subsequent movement to all the other signs of the zodiac, before returning to Mesham on the first day of Chittirai, it is considered to be the start of new beginnings, filled with auspiciousness and positive energy, said Tirukkudanthai Dr. Venkatesh.

The month of Chittirai is a salubrious one (also known as Vasantha season) and it is human nature to expect an end to the heat of troubles and onset of better times on all fronts. To this end, people turn to their favourite deities, praying for benign grace and benediction and temple visits are highly efficacious. The reading of the almanac is another highlight of the new year. Our sastras say that one should read the almanac every day before setting out of the house for the day's grind. However, due to various reasons, if one is unable to do so, one should listen to vedic pundits reading the almanac on this day, in temples and other places of congregation. As the new year dawns, one should do tarpan and appease one's pitrus and seek their blessings. Preparations for the Tamil New Year begin a day early in most houses, with festoons made of mango leaves going up. The New Year feast should include neem flowers, fresh mango, thin buttermilk, vada and payasam, as a symbolic acceptance that life will be a mix of sweet moments and bitter experiences, but with god's grace, one can find the strength to overcome everything.

Rupee cost averaging for NRIs

MARKETMOVE

Vivek Jain

India's investment landscape appeals to domestic and NRI investors alike, but it comes with its own challenges. Investor sentiment has taken a hit during the recent phase of correction in the Indian market. As a result, many of them try to time the market. But it is hardly easy to time a market that moves in unpredictable cycles.

Many investors try to chase peaks and avoid dips, only to end up making costly mistakes. A smarter strategy is Rupee Cost Averaging (RCA), allowing investors to capitalise on market volatility without getting caught up in short-term noise. RCA ensures NRIs stay invested, absorb market shocks and accumulate wealth over time.

Understanding RCA

RCA is a disciplined investment strategy where a fixed sum is invested periodically regardless of market conditions. This means when market prices are low, more units are bought and when prices rise, fewer units are bought. Over time, this strategy evens out the average investment a unit and shields investors from short-term fluctuations.

Consider an NRI investing ₹25,000 a month in an equity mutual fund via a Systematic Investment Plan (SIP). If the Net Asset Value (NAV) is ₹100, you purchase 250 units. If the NAV drops to ₹80, you buy 312 units. If the NAV rises to ₹120, you purchase 208 units.

Instead of outguessing the market, this approach allows NRIs accumulate wealth steadily while reducing risk.

For NRIs

Mitigating market volatility

Market movements are unpredictable and for NRIs not closely tracking Indian markets daily, staying updated on every fluctuation is impractical. RCA ensures investments continue uninterrupted, eliminating the need to make impulsive decisions during downturns. By sticking to a pre-set investment plan, they can benefit from market corrections.

Managing currency risks

NRIs also face an additional layer of uncertainty from foreign exchange fluctuations. When transferring money from abroad, the rupee's value against the investor's home currency can impact real cost of investments. RCA smoothens out this risk by spreading transactions over time, reducing exposure to unfavorable exchange rate movements.

India's long-term growth

India is one of the fastest-growing major economies. NRIs investing systematically can benefit from this long-term growth without worrying on short-term economic slowdown. Mutual funds, ULIPs or other investment vehicles, RCA secures participation in India's economic progress with minimal stress.

Financial goals with discipline

Many NRIs invest in India with long-term objectives in mind. It could be retirement planning or securing a child's future education. RCA aligns with these goals by instilling discipline and preventing emotional investing. NRIs can focus on steady capital accumulation and the power of compounding.

At its core, RCA is about maintaining a steady investment approach even when markets fluctuate. It prevents the classic investor mistake of panic selling in downturns or over-investing in market peaks. During a market correction, investors following RCA automatically buy more units at a lower cost, which positions them for stronger future gains when the market recovers.

As India's markets continue to evolve, those who stay invested with a long-term vision are likely to see the best results.

Rupee Cost Averaging provides NRIs with the right balance of risk management and wealth creation.

(The writer is chief business officer, life insurance, Policybazaar.com)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Opting for no-cost EMI to buy consumer durables

No-cost EMIs are quite helpful for individuals who need to make necessary high-ticket purchases like gadgets and can't afford upfront payment but they must be aware of pitfalls

EASY BUY

Rohit Chhibbar

> Unlike regular EMI transactions, no-cost EMI allows you to divide the cost of a product into monthly instalments without any interest

> Additional costs like processing fee, impact on credit limit and potential penalties must be considered before opting for a no-cost EMI

No-cost EMI is one of the most popular financing options for high-ticket consumer durables such as gadgets and home appliances. It allows consumers to defer high-value purchases over several monthly instalments without any additional interest charges. Popular e-com-platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Ajio, TataCLiQ and more offer the facility in collaboration with leading card issuers. But let's take a closer look at the benefits of no-cost EMIs and some key factors to consider when opting for it.

How it works?

Unlike regular EMI transactions, no-cost EMI allows you to divide the cost of a product into monthly instalments without any interest. The interest is still factored into the EMI, but merchants or lenders offset it by providing an equivalent discount.

Here is an example. Suppose you are buying a refrigerator worth ₹60,000 using credit card EMI for six months. If the card issuer charges an interest rate of 16% on EMIs, the total interest charged will be ₹9,600, along with 18% GST on the interest component amounting to ₹1,728. In a regular EMI plan, you have to pay the product price and the interest along with GST, which means total outgo would be ₹71,328.

However, in the case of no-cost EMI, the interest amount is adjusted as a discount, allowing you to get the product at its actual price. In the above example, the merchant would offer an upfront discount of ₹9,600, which will cover interest cost, effectively reducing EMI amount to ₹10,000 per month. This means, you would be paying only actual price of the product, that is ₹60,000.

However, a key factor to consider is while the merchant provides an upfront discount to offset the interest cost, the GST on the interest amount is still payable by the cardholder. In the above example, GST of ₹1,728 will be charged to credit card. Note, GST will also be applicable on processing fee and other applicable charges.

Choose tenure wisely

Unlike regular EMIs, no-cost EMIs generally have shorter repayment tenures, typically ranging from 3-9 months. A shorter tenure would increase EMI amount, hence it is important to choose the tenure strategically. You must ensure the EMI amount fits monthly budget and you can comfortably pay dues on time.

Read fine print

While the term "no-cost" sounds appealing, many lenders charge processing fee on no-cost EMIs, which increases the overall cost of the product. Although you get the product at actual price, the additional charges can add to the cost. Similarly, some lenders slap pre-payment penalties. So, if you anticipate that you would have funds to pay the amount earlier, you must check the associated terms. Also, note 18% GST will be applicable on the interest, processing fee and other applicable charges, which you would need to pay out of pocket.

Loss of rewards

Most credit cards exclude EMI transactions from rewards and cashback programmes. So, despite charging a high-value transaction to your card, you would not get any benefits. For instance, if you buy an item worth ₹50,000 on EMI from Amazon using a credit card that offers 5% cashback on online spends, you would miss earning ₹2,500 cashback.

Merchants offer no-cost EMI in collaboration with card issuers like SBI Card, Axis Bank and others. Generally, the offer applies to all cards. However, in some cases, no-cost EMI may be applicable only on select credit card variants. Hence, it is crucial to check if your card is eligible.

Timely payment

In addition, you must ensure paying the EMIs as and when due to avoid finance charges and late payment penalties. Moreover, when you purchase a product on EMI, your credit limit is blocked for the entire transaction amount and gradually released as you pay, which can increase your credit utilisation ratio initially. This could be a concern for individuals with a single credit card with low credit limit, as a high CUR may impact credit score.

No-cost EMIs are quite helpful for individuals who need to make necessary high-ticket purchases like gadgets, consumer durables, etc. but cannot afford upfront payment. They provide them with the flexibility to buy the products and defer the payment over several months, without disrupting their cash flow.

However, additional costs like processing fees, the impact on your credit limit and potential penalties must be carefully considered before opting for a no-cost EMI. Always weigh benefits against potential pitfalls before proceeding.

(The writer is chief business officer, credit cards, Paisabazaar.com)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
HDFC Bank	10.90-24.00	10,846-14,384	2,169-2,877	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	11.99 onwards	11,120 onwards	2,224 onwards	Up to 4%
State Bank of India	10.30-15.30	10,697-11,974	2,139-2,395	Up to 1.5% (Min. Rs 1000; Max. Rs 15,000)
ICICI Bank	10.85-16.65	10,834-12,332	2,167-2,466	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.05-18.50	10,884-12,833	2,177-2,567	Up to 2% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	11.25-22.00	10,934-13,809	2,187-2,762	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99-16.99	10,869-12,424	2,174-2,485	Up to 5%
Bank of India	11.60-16.20	11,021-12,212	2,204-2,442	Up to 1% (Min. Rs250; Max. Rs 15,000)
Canara Bank	10.70-16.15	10,797-12,199	2,159-2,440	Up to 0.25% (Max. Rs 5,000)
Punjab National Bank	11.25-17.80	10,934-12,642	2,187-2,528	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	10.15-16.00	10,660-12,159	2,132-2,432	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.99 onwards	11,120 onwards	2,224 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.10-15.20	10,896-11,948	2,179-2,390	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-31.00	10,624-16,485	2,125-3,297	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.60-13.65	10,772-11,544	2,154-2,309	0.50%-1%
Indian Overseas Bank	10.75-14.15	10,809-11,673	2,162-2,335	Up to 0.75%
UCO Bank	10.95-13.95	11,236-11,621	2,172-2,324	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	2%
Bank of Maharashtra	9.75-14.55	10,562-11,777	2,112-2,355	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Central Bank of India	10.85-12.65	10,834-11,287	2,167-2,257	Up to 1%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
Union Bank of India	8.45-10.20	10,246 - 10,673	Up to Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.60-10.45	10,282 - 10,735	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.80-12.45	10,331 - 11,236	0.50% (Rs 2,500 - Rs. 10,000)
UCO Bank	8.45-11.00	10,246 - 10,871	NIL
State Bank of India	9.10-10.15	10,403 - 10,660	Rs 750 - Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	8.80-9.60	10,331 - 10,525	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.45-12.75	10,246 - 11,313	0.25% of loan (max. up to Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.40-12.00	10,234 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	Up to 1% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 9,000)
Karnataka Bank	9.32-11.80	10,457 - 11,072	Up to 0.60% (Rs 2500 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	10.40 onwards	10,722 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
Punjab and Sind Bank***	8.50-15.00	10,258 - 11,895	0.25% (Rs 1,000-Rs 15,000)
Indian Bank	8.60-9.85	10,282 - 10,587	Rs. 1000
IDFC First Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	Up to Rs 10,000
City Union Bank	14.45-14.95	11,751 - 11,882	1.25% (Min: Rs 750)

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders.
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.25% to borrowers having credit scores of 750-799.
***Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on April 9 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

Question of choice

THINKINVESTOR

An investment coach, unlike an investment advisor, will not help you make any investment choices but will help you become aware of your relationship with money and investments

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Investing is not just about analysing the market's various scenarios on an excel sheet and choosing appropriate investments to accumulate wealth. It also involves managing emotions relating to investments. Here, we discuss why emotions are crucial for decision-making and why you need a behavioural coach to emotionally manage your investments.

Managing emotions

The price we pay for letting emotions dominate your investment decisions is called behavioural gap. This refers to the difference between investor returns and investment returns; lower the returns you earn when actively buying and selling shares or switching from one fund to another compared with a buy-and-hold returns on the investment. Why the difference? Anxiety can cause us to take profit quickly only to see the market continually move up thereafter. Regret could prompt us to switch from one fund to another only to see the fund we switched from outperform the one we switched into! It's not easy to learn from our emotionally-driven mistakes.

This does not mean we can do better sans emotions. Neuroscientists have shown that we cannot take even simple decisions when the brain region ruling our emotion is impaired. Studies show how brain-impaired patients can be irrational and risk-seeking because they cannot assess the risk associated with their decisions. While emotion is vital, letting emotions rule our investment decisions can lead to adverse consequences. What should you do?

You can keep investment choices simple, buying ETFs or index funds for capital appreciation and investing in bank deposits for income returns. But you still need to manage emotions to manage investments through the time horizon for a life goal. So, you can hire an investment coach. An investment coach, unlike investment advisor, will not help you make your investment choices but will help you become aware of your relationship with money and investments.

Conclusion

Not all of us have time and inclination to self-manage money. So, you may be pressed to hire an investment advisor. The optimal solution would be to choose an advisor who also leans on behavioural aspects of investing. The goal is to improve financial wellbeing, not just accumulate wealth with the related anxiety arising from market risk. Many investment advisors have long recognised the need to understand clients' relationship with money. Hire such an investment advisor – one also skillful at financial counselling, a financial therapist.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage personal investments)

PORT SUDAN

Sudan paramilitaries kill 56 over two days in Darfur town: activists

AFP

Sudan's paramilitaries killed 56 civilians over two days of attacks on a town they seized on the road to El-Fasher, the last major city in the Darfur region still in Army hands, activists said. The killings on Friday and Saturday targeted residents in Um Kadadah "on an ethnic basis", according to the local resistance committee. AFP

DUBAI

UAE President expresses desire to support Syria reconstruction

REUTERS

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan said he wants to support Syria's reconstruction as he met on Sunday with interim President Muhammad al-Jolani in Abu Dhabi. Jolani has sought Gulf financial support for war-torn Syria since he led a lightning offensive that toppled the Bashar al-Assad dispensation. AP

KABUL

Days after four shot, Taliban leader says executions are part of Islam

AFP

Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada said executions were part of Islam, days after four men were killed by gunfire in Afghanistan after they were convicted of murder. In a speech in Kandahar, he said "We must carry out disciplinary measures, perform prayers and acts of worship. We must enter Islam completely." AP

DHAKA

Court issues arrest warrant against Hasina, sister, British MP Tulip

AP

A court in Bangladesh issued arrest warrants against ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana, British MP Tulip Rizwana Siddiq, and 50 others in connection with the alleged illegal acquisition of land by abusing political power. The decision comes based on chargesheets filed by Anti-Corruption Commission. PTI

Semiconductor tariffs coming in a 'month or two', says U.S.

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

The U.S. Commerce Secretary said on Sunday that tariffs on semiconductors would probably be coming "in a month or two."

"We can't be relying on China for fundamental things that we need: our medicines and our semiconductors need to be built in America," Howard Lutnick told *ABC*'s "This Week."

Meanwhile, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said on Sunday these electronics that were exempted from President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs will still be subject to tariffs, just under a different category.

China urges U.S. to cancel reciprocal tariffs completely

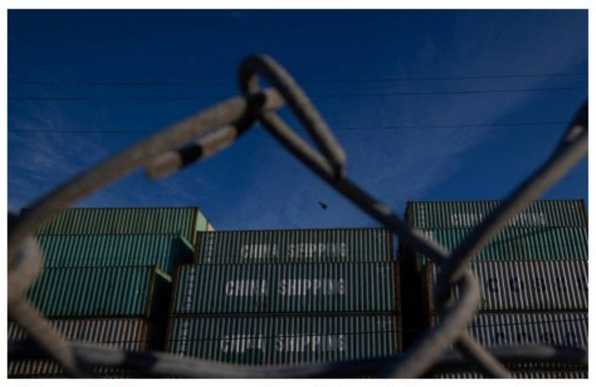
Asking Washington to return to the 'right path of mutual respect', Beijing calls the exemption of electronics from tariff list a 'small step' and says it is evaluating the impact of the U.S. decision

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China on Sunday called on the U.S. to "completely cancel" its reciprocal tariffs after Washington announced exemptions for consumer electronics and key chip-making equipment.

"We urge the U.S. to... take a big step to correct its mistakes, completely cancel the wrong practice of 'reciprocal tariffs' and return to the right path of mutual respect," a Commerce Ministry spokesperson said in a statement.

Beijing called the exemptions a "small step" by Washington and said that China was "evaluating the impact" of the decision.



Minor relief: The new exemptions will benefit U.S. companies such as Apple, which makes iPhones in China. REUTERS

The new exemptions will benefit U.S. tech companies like Nvidia and Dell, as well as Apple, which makes iPhones and other premium products in China.

U.S. Customs data suggests the exempted items account for more than 20% of those Chinese imports, according to senior RAND researcher Gerard DiPippo.

'Facing steep tariffs, China has sought to present itself as a stable alternative to an erratic Washington, courting countries spooked by the global economic storm.

Mr. Trump's reciprocal tariffs have "not only failed to solve any of the United States' own problems but have seriously undermined the global economic and trade order", Beijing's commerce ministry said.

34 killed, 117 wounded in Russian strike on Ukraine

Associated Press
KYIV

At least 34 people were killed in a Russian missile strike on the Ukrainian city of Sumy on Sunday, officials said.

Two ballistic missiles struck the heart of the city at around 10.15 a.m. as people gathered to celebrate Palm Sunday, according to officials.

At least 34 people were killed as a result of the attack, including two children, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine said in a statement. A further 117 people were injured, including 15 children, it said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed that rescue efforts were ongoing and said "dozens" had been killed in the double missile attack.

Dystopian world: Two ballistic missiles struck the heart of Sumy around 10.15 a.m. as people gathered to celebrate Palm Sunday. AP

"According to preliminary information, dozens of civilians were killed and wounded. Only filthy scum can act like this – taking the lives of ordinary people," he said. The head of the Ukrainian President's office, Andriy Yermak, said that the strike had also used cluster munitions in an attempt to kill as many people as possible.

Other world leaders also condemned the attack, with French President Emmanuel Macron saying that the strike undermined Washington-led peace talks between the two sides.

Ready to ensure Iran never gets a nuclear bomb, says Hegseth

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

The U.S. Defence Secretary reiterated that Washington hopes for a diplomatic solution to keep Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, but if that failed the military was ready "to go deep and to go big."

U.S. and Iranian diplomats opened indirect talks on Saturday in Oman in an effort to resolve Western concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Sunday described the first, tentative contacts in Oman as "a good step."

We have shown a capability to go far, to go deep and to go big, says the U.S. Defence Secretary

He told *CBS*'s "Face the Nation" that while President Donald Trump hoped to never have to resort to a military option, "We've shown a capability to go far, to go deep and to go big." "Again, we don't want to do that, but if we have to, we will to prevent the nuclear bomb in Iran's hands."

At least 21 killed as Israel strikes across Gaza on Palm Sunday, targets hospital

Associated Press
DEIR AL-BALAH

A wave of Israeli strikes across Gaza on Sunday hit a hospital, a municipal building, a home and a vehicle, killing at least 21 people, including children, as Israel vowed to expand its security presence in the small coastal strip.

A predawn strike on al-Ahli Hospital, in Gaza City, was the latest of several attacks on the last major hospital providing critical healthcare in northern Gaza.

One patient, a girl, died during the evacuation because staff were unable to provide urgent care.

No let-up: Relatives mourn over the bodies of Palestinians killed in an Israeli strike in Deir el-Balah in Gaza Strip on Sunday. AFP

Al-Ahli Hospital is run by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which condemned the attack, saying it occurred on "Palm Sunday, the start of the Holy Week, the most sacred week of the Christian year." Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Hours later, a strike on a car in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza killed at least seven persons including six brothers. The youngest brother was 10.

An airstrike Sunday afternoon hit a house in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza, killing at least seven persons including two women. A pregnant woman was rescued from the rubble.

Another strike in Deir al-Balah hit a municipal building Sunday afternoon and killed at least three persons. In Khan Younis, a strike killed at least three persons.

Baloch separatists kill eight Pakistanis across border in Iran

Agence France-Presse
ISLAMABAD

Separatists killed eight Pakistanis in Iran, Islamabad said on Sunday, across the border from Pakistan's Balochistan province where there are regular deadly attacks.

Pakistan has been battling a decades-long insurgency in impoverished Balochistan, which militant groups claim is being exploited by outsiders, with wealth from its natural resources syphoned off with little benefit to the local population.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday condemned the "brutal killings of eight Pakistanis", calling on Tehran to "immediately arrest the culprits".

The Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), a Pakistani separatist group, and Jaish al-Adl (Arabic for Army of Justice), a Baloch jihadist group that is based in Pakistan but is also active in Iran, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Iran and Pakistan frequently accuse each other of allowing militants to operate from their territory to carry out cross-border attacks.

Sport

McIlroy roars into the lead with a historic start in penultimate round

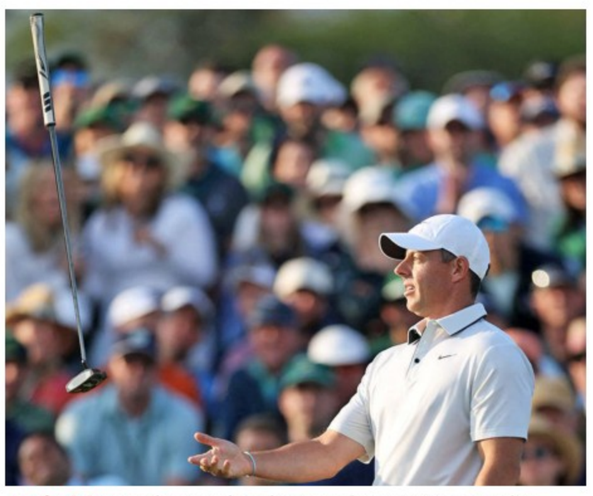
AUGUSTA MASTERS

Agence France-Presse
AUGUSTA

Rory McIlroy charged to the Masters lead with a historic start to Saturday's third round, then finished strong on Augusta National's back nine to stand two clear atop the leaderboard heading into final round.

McIlroy had two eagles and four birdies in a six-under-par 66 and with a 12-under total of 204 was two strokes clear of Bryson DeChambeau.

McIlroy, who had a six-under in the second round too, is poised to strike for a long-coveted Green Jacket that would see him join Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods as the only players to complete a career Grand Slam. McIlroy's first eagle of the day was at the par-five second, part of six straight threes to open his round – a first in Masters history. His second eagle at the par-five 15th, where he stuck his approach six feet from the pin, was the first of the day there and pushed his lead back to four strokes after it had dwindled to one with bogeys at the eighth and 10th.



Magical day: McIlroy produced a second successive six-under to move two clear at the top. AFP

DeChambeau birdied three of the last four holes for a three-under 69 and a 10-under total of 206. Canadian Corey Conners was alone in third after a two-under-par 70 for 208.

Top scores (after third round): **204** — Rory McIlroy; **206** — Bryson DeChambeau. **208** — Corey Conners; **210** — Patrick Reed, Ludvig Aberg; **211** — Justin Rose, Scottie Scheffler, Shane Lowry, Jason Day.

Van Dijk's late winner edges Liverpool closer to title

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
LIVERPOOL

Liverpool is within touching distance of the Premier League title after Virgil van Dijk sealed a dramatic 2-1 win over West Ham, while Newcastle climbed into the top four with a 4-1 thrashing of Manchester United on Sunday.

Luis Diaz's first-half strike at Anfield was cancelled out by Andrew Robertson's late own goal, but Van Dijk headed Liverpool's winner in the closing moments. Arne Slot's side is 13 points clear of second-placed Arsenal with six games left.

Ecstatic: van Dijk celebrates after scoring Liverpool's second against West Ham. AFP

Barcelona needed an own goal to eke out a 1-0 win at relegation-threatened Leganes and protect its lead of the Spanish league on Saturday.

The results: Premier League: Chelsea 2 (Tuanzebe 46-og, Sancho 79) drew with Ipswich 2 (Enciso 19, Johnson 31); Liverpool 2 (Diaz 18, Van Dijk 89) bt West Ham 1 (Robertson 86-og); Wolves 4 (Ait Nouri 2, Spence 38-og, Strand Larsen 64, Cunha 86) bt Tottenham 2 (Tel 59, Richarlison 85); Newcastle 4 (Tonali 24, Barnes 49, 64, Guimaraes 77) bt Manchester United 1 (Garnacho 37)

LaLiga: Osasuna 2 (Budimir 38, Ibanez 79) bt Girona 1 (Asprilla 90+6); Alaves 0 lost to Real Madrid 1 (Camavinga 34).

Serie A: Atalanta 2 (Retegui 3, Pasalic 21) bt Bologna 0.

On Saturday: LaLiga: Real Sociedad 0 lost to Real Mallorca 2 (Larin 20, Darder 47); Getafe 1 (Alderete 19) lost to Las Palmas 3 (Silva 53, 74, McBurnie 61); Celta Vigo 0 lost to Espanyol 2 (Fernandez 28, 63); Leganes 0 lost to Barcelona 1 (Saenz 48-og).

Serie A: Juventus 2 (Koopmeiners 2, Yildiz 33) bt Lecce 1 (Baschirotto 87).

CMYK
M BG-BGE

IN ELITE CLUB

Kohli becomes second batter to score 100 fifties in T20 cricket

R.V. MOORTHY

Virat Kohli struck his 100th half-century in T20 cricket in RCB's nine-wicket win over RR in the IPL on Sunday. Kohli smashed his third fifty of the season, and the 66th in the tournament, to go level with Australia's David Warner. Warner leads the fifty count in the format (108 in 400 games) followed by Kohli (100, 405 matches).

DISAPPOINTING

Fleming hurt by lack of fight shown by Super Kings

SANDEEP SAXENA

The disappointing aspect particularly in the last game (eight-wicket loss to KKR at home) was the lack of competition we put up, and that hurt a lot. It's important that we put out a performance that is representative of the proud franchise that we are — CSK head coach Stephen Fleming on the eve of the match against LSG.

TASK FORCE

ICC announces initiative to support displaced Afghan women cricketers

AFP

The ICC on Sunday announced the creation of a task force to support displaced Afghan women cricketers. The initiative will see the setting up of a "dedicated fund to provide direct monetary assistance, ensuring these cricketers have the resources they need" to continue playing, according to the ICC.

ICC CRICKET COMMITTEE

Ganguly remains chairperson, Laxman a panel member again

FILE PHOTO

Sourav Ganguly was re-appointed chairperson of the ICC men's cricket committee while V.V.S. Laxman was picked again as a panel member. Former Afghan player Hamid Hassan, West Indies batting great Desmond Haynes, South Africa's Temba Bavuma, and former England batter Jonathan Trott will also be part of the committee.

Capitals run out of steam after Karun's heroics

The 33-year-old, playing his first League game since May 2022, makes a swashbuckling 40-ball 89 and puts Delhi on course before Impact Player and leggie Karn spins it in Mumbai Indians' favour

Top class: Boundaries flowed from Karun's willow in an incredible IPL comeback. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

IPL-18

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

Runs have rained relentlessly from Karun Nair's bat in domestic cricket for the past few months. For Delhi Capitals in the IPL at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Sunday, Karun's purple patch was on further evidence. That the 33-year-old was playing his first IPL game in three years didn't matter as he produced a scintillating 40-ball 89 against Mumbai Indians in a run chase of 206. Agonisingly for Karun, however, DC imploded after his exit, losing its last seven wickets for 58 runs in 44 balls to suffer a 12-run defeat.

The home side lost its last three wickets to run-outs off successive deliveries in the penultimate over. Leg-spinner Karn Sharma (three for 36), who came on as an Impact Player, was the pick of the MI bowlers. Karun, who was cooling his heels for the first four games of DC's campaign, had the host in the driving seat till the time he was in the middle.

After 11 overs, DC was 128 for two, requiring another 78 runs from 54 balls. It took something special for Karun to be dislodged. Mitchell Santner was the man to prise out the key scalp in the 12th over, getting one to pitch on middle stump and turn just enough to take off-pole. The game turned on its head from thereon.

Karun's assault against Jasprit Bumrah inside the first six overs had been breathtaking. The spearhead is seldom meted out rough treatment, but his first two overs on Sunday went for 29 runs as the DC batter played shots of the highest quality.

That he had ample time at hand was evident when he backed away and played an inside-out drive over cover for four. When the length was a tad shorter, he carved the ball through point for the same result.

In Bumrah's next over, Karun unfurled more magic. Off a length ball angled at his body, his strong wrists came into play to send the ball soaring over the square-leg boundary for six. Four balls later, he lofted over covers for another maximum.

On a surface that didn't take long to reveal its batting-friendly character, Tilak Varma had led the way for MI with the bat earlier with a 33-ball 59.

Next assignment

DC: April 16 vs RR
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

MI: April 17 vs SRH
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS
Rohit Sharma lbw b Vipraj 18 *(12b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Ryan Rickelton b Kuldeep 41 *(25b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Suryakumar Yadav c Starc b Kuldeep 40 *(28b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Tilak Varma c Porel b Mukesh 59 *(33b, 6x4, 3x6)*, Hardik Pandya c Stubbs b Vipraj 2 (4b), Naman Dhir (not out) 38 *(17b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Will Jacks (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-5): 6; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 205.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-47 (Rohit, 4.6 overs), 2-75 (Rickelton, 7.4), 3-135 (Suryakumar, 13.1), 4-138 (Hardik, 14.1), 5-200 (Tilak, 19.4).

CAPITALS BOWLING
Starc 3-0-43-0, Mukesh 4-0-38-1, Vipraj 4-0-41-2, Kuldeep 4-0-23-2, Axar 2-0-19-0, Mohit 3-0-40-0.

DELHI CAPITALS
Jake Fraser-McGurk c Jacks b Chahar 0 *(1b)*, Abishek Porel c Naman b Karn 33 *(25b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Karun Nair **(Impact Player for Mukesh)** b Santner 89 *(40b, 12x4, 5x6)*, K.L. Rahul c & b Karn 15 *(13b, 1x4)*, Axar Patel c Suryakumar b Bumrah 9 *(6b, 2x4)*, Tristan Stubbs c Naman b Karn 1 *(4b)*, Ashutosh Sharma run out 17 *(14b, 2x4)*, Vipraj Nigam st. Rickelton b Santner 14 *(8b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Mitchell Starc (not out) 1 *(1b)*, Kuldeep Yadav run out 1 *(1b)*, Mohit Sharma run out 0 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-4, w-9): 13; Total (in 19 overs): 193.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-0 (Fraser-McGurk, 0.1), 2-119 (Porel, 10.2), 3-135 (Karun, 11.4), 4-144 (Axar, 12.4), 5-145 (Stubbs, 13.3), 6-160 (Rahul, 15.3), 7-180 (Vipraj, 17.4), 8-192 (Ashutosh, 18.4), 9-193 (Kuldeep, 18.5).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Chahar 3-0-24-1, Boult 2-0-21-0, Bumrah 4-0-44-1, Santner 4-0-43-2, Hardik 2-0-21-0, Karn **(Impact Player for Rohit)** 4-0-36-3.

Toss: Capitals.
PoM: Karn.
MI won by 12 runs.

Salt and Kohli combine to help RCB maintain its perfect away record

M.R. Praveen Chandran
JAIPUR

Royal Challengers Bengaluru is proving to be a force to reckon with on the road in IPL 2025. After registering wins in Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai, the Bengaluru side added Jaiput to the list after it walloped Rajasthan Royals by nine wickets at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium here on Sunday.

Royals' homecoming this season wasn't a happy affair as it ended in a huge defeat much to the disappointment of the capacity crowd. RCB's gun pair of Phil Salt (65) and Virat Kohli (62 not out) set up the win with an opening stand of 92 in 8.4 overs.

The PowerPlay, during which RCB raced to 65 for no loss, set the template for the chase. The Royals bowlers sprayed the ball around and fielders failed to hold on to the catches, letting RCB off the hook. The catching was bizarre with 10 chances going down in the contest, but the drops by Rajasthan proved costly.

Salt enjoyed a large slice of fortune, with Jaiswal and Sandeep Sharma failing to grab the opportunities. He made it count and with an assortment of pulls, cuts and drives cantered to his half-century off 28 balls. Kohli, dropped by Riyan Parag at long-on when he was on seven, was the accumulator during Salt's carnage.

However, after Salt's departure, Kohli went into overdrive and carted Kumar Kartikeya and Wanindu Hasaranga for sixes to reach his fifty off 39 balls. Impact Player Devdutt Padikkal (40 not out) punished the wayward deliveries to add 83 with Kohli to hasten the win.

In the afternoon, Royals openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sanju Samson struggled for timing on the slow surface.

But Jaiswal (75) took risks and rode his luck to keep the momentum going.

Jaiswal's second-wicket stand of 56 with Parag (30) gave the innings the impetus it needed.

Dhruv Jurel (35 not out) found his bearing, but Royals' total proved inadequate once Salt and Kohli took guard.

Fortune favours the brave: Salt rode his luck to smash a 33-ball 65. R.V. MOORTHY

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Gujarat Titans	6	4	2	8	1.081
Delhi Capitals	5	4	1	8	0.899
Royal Challengers	6	4	2	8	0.672
Lucknow Super Giants	6	4	2	8	0.162
Kolkata Knight Riders	6	3	3	6	0.803
Punjab Kings	5	3	2	6	0.065
Mumbai Indians	6	2	4	4	0.104
Rajasthan Royals	6	2	4	4	-0.838
Sunrisers Hyderabad	6	2	4	4	-1.245
Chennai Super Kings	6	1	5	2	-1.554

** Till the DC-MI match on April 13*

SCOREBOARD

RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Yashasvi Jaiswal lbw b Hazlewood 75 *(47b, 10x4, 2x6)*, Sanju Samson st. Jitesh b Krunal 15 *(19b, 1x4)*, Riyan Parag c Kohli b Dayal 30 *(22b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Dhruv Jurel (not out) 35 *(23b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Shimron Hetmyer c Padikkal **(Impact Player for Suyash)** b Bhuvneshwar 9 *(8b, 1x4)*, Nitish Rana (not out) 4 *(1b, 1x4)*; Extras (lb-3, w-2): 5; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 173.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-49 (Samson, 6.5 overs), 2-105 (Parag, 13.2), 3-126 (Jaiswal, 15.6), 4-169 (Hetmyer, 19.5).

RCB BOWLING
Bhuvneshwar 4-0-32-1, Dayal 4-0-36-1, Hazlewood 3-0-26-1, Krunal 4-0-29-1, Livingstone 1-0-8-0, Suyash 4-0-39-0.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS
Phil Salt c Jaiswal b Kartikeya 65 *(33b, 5x4, 6x6)*, Virat Kohli (not out) 62 *(45b, 4x4, 2x6)*, Devdutt Padikkal (not out) 40 *(28b, 5x4, 1x6)*; Extras (nb-1, w-7): 8; Total (for one wkt. in 17.3 overs): 175.

FALL OF WICKET
1-92 (Salt, 8.4 overs).

ROYALS BOWLING
Archer 4-0-36-0, Deshpande 2-0-21-0, Sandeep 2.3-0-29-0, Theekshana 2-0-21-0, Kartikeya **(Impact Player for Nitish)** 3-0-25-1, Hasaranga 3-0-33-0, Parag 1-0-10-0.

Toss: RCB; **PoM:** Salt.
RCB won by nine wickets with 15 deliveries to spare.

Next assignment

RR: April 16 vs DC
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

RCB: April 18 vs PBKS
Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

CSK faces a Herculean task against a marauding Pooran and LSG

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
LUCKNOW

Nicholas Pooran is batting like a dream. He's striking at 215.43 per 100 balls. He's become a six-hitting outlier – his average of 5.1 sixes per match this season is the best in the IPL history among those who've hit at least 20 sixes in a season.

But for Chennai Super Kings, which takes on Lucknow Super Giants at the Ekana Stadium here on Monday, his batting poses a big threat. How does CSK negate a batter who has single-handedly hit nearly as many sixes (31) as all its batters have collectively managed to (32)?

How do the CSK spinners tame a spin-slayer who strikes spin at 272.46 (22 sixes)?

Super Kings might have an interesting match-up, though. Pooran has been dismissed twice in three innings and has scored only two runs off eight balls in the IPL against its left-arm wrist spinner and Purple Cap-holder Noor Ahmad.

But, for that to play out, CSK has to first go through Mitchell Marsh if he plays. It has to contain Marsh and his opening partner Aiden Markram in the PowerPlay.

Forget about LSG's batting riches, CSK has to repair its own batting.

How does it maximise and not lose too many wickets in the PowerPlay? How does it frequently hit fours and sixes? How does it not play too many dot balls?

How does it string together at least one substantial partnership?

These might seem T20 101, but sadly what the five-time champion contends with.

CSK does try, but does it try hard enough?

Because, even for the cosmos to collude with it, CSK has to be challenging enough.

Let's do this: The Super Kings think-tank would have had a lot to discuss ahead of the meeting against Super Giants. SANDEEP SAXENA

Today's match

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS vs. CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 5
LSG 3 | CSK 1 | NR 1

PREVIOUS MEETING
LSG won by **six wickets**, 2024

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIOHOTSTAR

McLaren steals the show as Piastri takes the top spot and Norris finishes third

Reuters
SAKHIR

McLaren's Oscar Piastri won the Bahrain GP from pole position on Sunday to cut the gap to teammate Lando Norris to three points after four races.

Piastri started the day third overall and 13 points adrift of Norris, sixth on the grid, and ended it as the Briton's closest rival and the first driver to take the chequered flag twice this season.

George Russell was second for Mercedes, 15.499s behind, with Norris third. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton were fourth and fifth. The win was a first for McLaren in Bahrain, home of the team's majority owners.

Provisional results: 1. Piastri (McLaren); 2. Russell (Mercedes) +15.499; 3. Norris (McLaren) 16.273; 4. Leclerc (Ferrari) 19.679; 5. Hamilton (Ferrari) 27.993; 6. Verstappen (Red Bull) 34.395; 7. Gasly (Alpine) 36.002; 8. Ocon (Haas) 44.244; 9. Tsunoda (Red Bull) 45.061; 10. Bearman (Haas) 47.594; 11. Antonelli (Mercedes) 48.016; 12. Albon (Williams) 48.839; 13. Hulkenberg (Stake F1) 53.472; 14. Hadjar (Racing Bulls) 56.314; 15. Doohan (Alpine) 57.806; 16. Alonso (Aston Martin) 60.340; 17. Lawson (Racing Bull) 64.435; 18. Stroll (Aston Martin) 65.489; 19. Bortoleto (Stake F1) 66.872; **DNF:** Sainz (Williams).

Standings: Drivers: 1. Norris 77; 2. Piastri 74; 3. Verstappen 69; 4. Russell 63; 5. Leclerc 32.

Constructors: 1. McLaren 151; 2. Mercedes 93; 3. Red Bull 71; 4. Ferrari 57; 5. Haas 20.

> It's very important given our owners. It's never been a track that's been kind to us, so it's nice to have our first win here
> **PIASTRI**

Lights to flag
It was Piastri's day out in Bahrain, home of McLaren's majority team owners
1 McLaren wins the Bahrain GP for the first time
1 Piastri becomes the first to win multiple races this season
1 Red Bull registers its first double points weekend since the 2024 Las Vegas GP
4 Antonelli is the fourth driver in history to score points in his first four races
17 Mercedes equals Ferrari for most podium finishes in Bahrain
18 Hamilton extends his record for most finishes in Sakhir
1000
On his 41st turn, Hamilton made it 1,000 laps at the Bahrain circuit

COMPILED BY ANIRUDH VELAMURI

INBRIEF

Ju wins seventh game, takes a three-point lead

Defending champion Ju Wenjun beat challenger Tan Zhongyi in the seventh game of the women's World chess championship at Chongqing on Sunday to take a three-point lead. She scored her third straight win, defeating Tan with white to jump ahead 5-2 and is just 1.5 points away from clinching the match with five games to be played.

India clinches silver in men's recurve team event

India clinched a silver in the men's recurve team event at the Archery World Cup Stage 1 after the trio of Dhiraj Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai, and Atanu Das lost 5-1 to China in the final, in Auburndale, USA, on Sunday. This was India's third medal of the event.

Churchill withdraws from Super Cup football

Churchill Brothers has withdrawn from Super Cup football, starting in Bhubaneswar on April 20, protesting against the AIFF's decision to not officially declare it as 2024-25 I-League winner, calling it a "blatant disregard of rules and precedent". In a letter on Saturday to AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey on Saturday, the Goan club also cited "irregularities" in the conduct of the Super Cup draw as another reason for pulling out.

Sriram Balaji & Reyes-Varela duo loses in semifinals

Sriram Balaji and Miguel Reyes-Varela lost 6-4, 7-5 to Santiago Gonzalez and Austin Krajicek in the doubles semifinals of the $200,000 Challenger tennis tournament in Mexico.

Nigerian football great Christian Chukwu dies age 74

Christian Chukwu, who led Nigeria to its first-ever Africa Cup of Nations title in 1980, died on Saturday, aged 74. A commanding central defender nicknamed 'Chairman' in his playing days, Chukwu was the player of the tournament at the 1980 AFCON. He also took Nigeria's Super Eagles to a third-place finish at the 2004 edition of the tournament in Tunisia as coach.

Sevilla parts ways with coach Garcia Pimienta

Sevilla sacked coach Francisco Garcia Pimienta on Sunday after a fourth consecutive LaLiga defeat. Spanish media reported Joaquin Caparros would take the reins until the end of the season.

Maertens breaks men's 400m freestyle world record

Olympic champion Lukas Maertens of Germany, on Saturday, broke the men's 400m freestyle world record dating back to 2009 at Stockholm Open. The 23-year-old clocked 3m 39.96s to shave 0.11s off the mark achieved by fellow German Paul Biedermann at the Rome Worlds in 2009. Biedermann's mark of 3:40.07 was achieved wearing a polyurethane swimsuit that has since been banned in competition.

Schumacher signs helmet for Stewart's dementia charity

Ferrari great Michael Schumacher signed a special helmet that was worn by fellow Formula One champion Jackie Stewart during a tribute lap of the Bahrain GP circuit on Sunday to raise funds for dementia research. Organisers said all 20 living Formula One world champions had signed the helmet that triple champion Stewart, 85, used while driving his 1973 title-winning Tyrrell on the 60th anniversary of his F1 debut.

Hope our players get tougher, physically and tactically: Vishal

The captain says the plan was to have the experience of Ankita for the doubles matches and youngsters for singles; hails the performance of Shrivalli and Vaidehi in the tournament; wants the team to be ready for the sterner challenges ahead

BJK CUP

Kamesh Srinivasan
PUNE

Five years after playing a sterling role in partnership with Sania Mirza, Ankita Raina did it once again, to take India to the Billie Jean King Cup World Group play-offs, by winning the decisive doubles against Korea, in the last league match in along with with Prarthana Thombare.

In 2020, Ankita had won the decisive doubles rubber against Indonesia to see India qualify as the second team behind China. Ankita had won three doubles matches then with Sania, apart from most of her singles matches, when the event was called the Fed-Cup.

This time around, captain Vishal Uppal opted to preserve the No.1 player in the team, Ankita, for the doubles in all the league matches. Ankita and Prarthana came up with an impressive performance against Sohyun Park and Kim Dabin to secure qualification.

We've done it: Team India rode on impressive performances to qualify for the BJK Cup World Group play-offs. KAMESH SRINIVASAN

He played a key role in making a plan and executing it nicely with the combined effort of the team.

"I am ecstatic at having achieved our *lakshya* (target) again. I have believed in these girls for a while now and they have further strengthened my resolve by this performance," said Vishal, who was the captain in 2020 as well.

He was particularly pleased to achieve the qualification on home soil, and share the joy with "fellow Indians."

The captain trusted the younger players with the load of tackling all singles matches, preserving Ankita for the decisive doubles.

"I studied the other teams when they were announced and saw the strengths of our team, and how we could use that tactically against each individual team.

"I felt we needed the firepower of the youth for singles, and for the crucial doubles, we needed the most experienced to handle the extra pressure.

"I am very happy that the plan worked," observed Vishal.

> I am ecstatic at having achieved our *lakshya* (target) again. I have believed in these girls for a while now and they have further strengthened my resolve by this performance

After Vaidehi Chaudhari had won two singles matches, Vishal opted to bring back Sahaja Yamalapalli to play the second singles as No. 1, playing Shrivalli in the first singles as No. 2, against Korea.

Shrivalli won against Park in a three-hour battle of wits, blasting her way out of trouble, and sustaining the explosive game till the end. Shrivalli in fact won all her five singles matches, and two of them against No. 1 singles opponents.

The team will have a few months to get ready for the World Group play-offs.

"I hope our players make themselves tougher physically and tactically. And also understand the importance of the mental game," he said.

Punjab to take on M.P. for the honours

HOCKEY

Sports Bureau

Madhya Pradesh rode on overall dominance throughout the match and some exceptional work both in attack and defence to enter the title clash of the 15th men's National hockey championships Division A in Jhansi on Sunday with a 5-3 victory against Manipur in the semifinals.

It will now take on Punjab for the championship, the latter registering a 4-3 win against Uttar Pradesh in the other semifinal.

The results (semifinals):
Madhya Pradesh 5 (Affan Yousuf 5, 34, Ali Ahmad 7, 15, Mohd. Zaid Khan 49) bt Manipur 3 (Rabichandra Singh 47, Chinglensana Singh 50, Dipu Singh 53).
Punjab 4 (Jasjit Singh Kular 14, 40, Harjeet Singh 22, Jugraj Singh 45) bt Uttar Pradesh 3 (Pawan Rajbhar 32, Shardanand Tiwari 41, 43).

Vitidsarn and Chen reign at Badminton Asia Championships

Vitidsarn and Chen. AFP

Agence France-Presse
NINGBO

Reigning world champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand and China's Chen Yufei won the men's and woen's singles crowns respectively at the Badminton Asia Championships in Ningbo, China, on Sunday.

Vitidsarn won after China's Lu Guangzu withdrew injured, trailing 12-21, 6-11, while Chen beat compatriot Han Yue 11-21, 21-14, 21-9 for the big prize.

Alcaraz rallies to win Monte Carlo Masters

Reuters
MONTE CARLO

Carlos Alcaraz overcame a slow start to beat Lorenzo Musetti 3-6, 6-1, 6-0 in the Monte Carlo Masters final on Sunday, clinching his first title at the claycourt event and gaining momentum ahead of next month's French Open.

It was a sixth Masters title for the four-time Grand Slam winner and his most prestigious since winning Wimbledon last year.

"I'm just really happy to have won Monte Carlo for the first time," said Alcaraz, who lost in his first match on his only previous appearance at the tournament in 2022.

Women's Grand Prix set to begin today

CHESS

Sports Bureau

The opening move of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess will be made at Amanora-The Fern, Pune, on Monday. Ten of the world's leading players are competing in the fifth leg of the Grand Prix, a qualifying event for the Candidates tournament that will determine the challenger for the World championship.

India's four best players – Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, R. Vaishali and Divya Deshmukh – are all competing here. Zhu Jiner (China), Polina Shuvalova (Russia), Alina Kashlinskaya (Poland), Nurgyul Salimova (Bulgaria), Batkhuyag Munguntuul (Mongolia) and Salome Melia (Georgia) complete the line-up.

The Grand Prix series features 20 players, with each player participating in three of the six events, played across the world. The top two will make it to the Candidates. Russia's Aleksandra Goryachkina is leading the Grand Prix table with 308 points.

Pairing for the first round:
Batkhuyag v Salome; Zhu v Harika; Kashlinskaya v Shuvalova; Salimova v Divya; Vaishali v Humpy.

Molina credits Bagan's success to hard work and quality

ISL

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

The quality of the players combined with hard work helped the team achieve its aim, said Mohun Bagan Super Giant head coach Jose Molina after his side completed an Indian Super League double on Saturday night. Having lifted the League Shield earlier in March, Mohun Bagan continued its successful run to annex the Cup and made it one of the most dominant performances by any team in ISL history.

"I believe in the process, and that takes care of the results. Once you believe in the process, and you have the tools, by which I mean the quality of the players, support staff and the fans, then you can have success," Molina explained after he was asked about the secret behind his team's success story.

"We have everything of quality in Mohun Bagan and that took us from one success to another. Now we won two titles – the Shield and the Cup .

"We worked hard every day to reach a level of preparation and the players tried to put their best on the ground. That worked well for us as you cannot predict a result but work for it," said Molina, who had previously won the ISL crown for the team's previous avatar ATK in 2016t

"I feel, for the fourth time in a row this season, we were better than them. We had everything under control. The penalty changed the match," said Bengaluru FC coach Gerard Zaragoza.

"In extra-time, my team went down, and they went up (in terms of performance). It is normal. Congratulations to Mohun Bagan, they deserve the season that they had," he added after his team lost a second ISL Cup final to Mohun Bagan in three seasons.

On a high: Bagan players celebrate with family and friends after achieving a grand double. X@INDSUPERLEAGUE

Indian boys lose to Indonesia in WJT

Sports Bureau

India lost to Indonesia 2-1 in the play-off match for the 9th to 12th place in the Asia-Oceania WJT under-14 boys' tennis championship in Kuching, Malaysia, on Sunday.

In the match for the 11th place, India will play Iran.

Japan beat Korea, and Kazakhstan beat Hong Kong to set up a title clash.

The results:
Play-off (9th to 12 place):
Indonesia bt India 2-1 (Rafael Pribadi lost to Kaustubh Singh 0-6, 1-6; Ethan Frans bt Viraj Choudhary 6-1, 6-1; Ethan & Komang Purustama bt Viraj & Paranjay Siwach 6-4, 6-1).

LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.

All set: Jeswin says the Indian Open would be a good preparation for the Federation Cup . FILE PHOTO: K.R DEEPAK

Jeswin keen to make the cut for Asian athletics championships

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Having trained in Florida, USA for the last three months, Jeswin Aldrin is now looking forward to his first event of the season– the Indian Open Meeting at the Nehru Stadium here on April 15.

The current National record holder in men's long jump (8.42m set in March 2023) said he is excited to take part in the Chennai event and added that he was keen to make the qualification mark of 8.07m for the Asian championships scheduled in Gumi, South Korea from May 27 to 31.

"I last took part in the Inter-State meet in the city in 2022. It is a new track here. I was in Florida to learn new techniques and will want to replicate them in Chennai.

"My focus will on qualifying for the Asian meet," Jeswin, who will be representing Reliance in the Chennai meet, told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

The 23-year-old also mentioned that the Indian Open would be good preparation for the Federation Cup to be held in Kochi from April 21 to 24.

Top names
The Indian Open here will also witness other top athletes including National record holder in men's 110m H. Tejas Ashok Shirse, Amoj Jacob (men's 400m), Jishna Mathew (women's 200m), Shalini Singh (women's long jump), Vithya Ramraj (women's 200m & 400m hurdles).